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AMIGA FORMAT

Show special
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ISSUE 28 ■ NOVEMBER 1991 ■ £2.95



Want to know a secret?

We blow the lid on the tricks and techniques that are used to create a game with top-class graphics

COVER DISK 28

AMIGA FORMAT



First Samurai

Incredible playable demo of Imageworks beat 'em up, the best we've ever seen!



Mig-29

Domark's demo of the Top Russian jet sim – a test of reaction, skill and guts

Plus NoiseTracker module player, Pools Predictor, Control Console front end, Stand Alone Utility maker and our regular Pic of the Month

NO COVERDISK?
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Which hard drive is best for you?

We put A500 hard drives to the test and help you decide which to buy

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Why are you STILL using a mouse?

How an alternative input device can improve your work

Future PUBLISHING

GAMES TESTED TO DESTRUCTION IN SCREENPLAY: Utopia, Midwinter 2: Flames of Freedom, Flight of the Intruder, Pitfighter, Stratego, Silent Service 2
WORD PROCESSING: new Protext makes the scene

PLUS the best in incredibly useful hints, tips and advice
Workbench p213
Gamebusters p111


THE SIMPSONS™
BART VS. THE
SPACE MUTANTS
BRAND
X
SPRAY
PAINT
NO CFC'S
MATT GROENING

PLAY THE GAME MAN!









Hello fellow humans!
Bartholomew J. Simpson here, with a very important secret:

SPACE MUTANTS ARE INVADING SPRINGFIELD

That's right man! A buncha slimy, horrible, totally gross and putrid monsters are taking over the bodies of the people who live here and they wanna build a weapon that's gonna take over the entire planet!

PReTTy CoOL, HUh?

Anyway, yours truly is the only one who can see 'em! I've gotta spray-paint things, get radical on my skateboard, use my trusty slingshot, and in general behave like a nuisance, man.
Plus, with evil dudes like Nelson the bully and Sideshow Bob getting in my way, it's a good thing I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out!
So if you're a decent person a patriot, and somebody who cares about this sorry planet, you'll do the right thing.

SAVE THE EARTH

BUy THIS GaME!
Thanks man.

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NOVEMBER 1991

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BACK ISSUES
Turn to Page 188 to find out how to get 'em!

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Quote of the month:
"Do it all you can: it's much better than The prefabricated concrete coal bunker"

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This month in

REGULARS

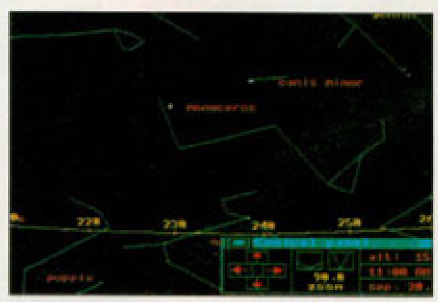


News brings details of some amazing new software and hardware, including the rather fascinating Fractal Scenery Animator, pictured.



Sherilyn Fenn? What the devil is she doing here? Well, just as you might expect, she features in one of the PD Demos we've picked out of this month's new releases for your delight and delectation.

REVIEWS



One of the most unusual bits of software to hit the Amiga in a while, Distant Suns is a fascinating glimpse into the world of astronomy. Check it out on Page 146.



If you're using a mouse for graphics or games, you may find there's a better way. We show you how alternative input in the form of a track-ball or graphics tablet could change the way you work on Page 193.



If you haven't got a hard drive for your Amiga 500, find out now how and what to buy. Everything you need to know about hard drives is on Page 199.

COMPETITION

SPECIALS

AMIGA presents
World of Commodore
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Commodore



Play the demo, gasp at the graphics, then find out how it's done: the programmers of First Samurai give away their secrets on Page 25



What's the difference between this and doing 100 miles an hour on a racing circuit? A top driver judges the quality of driving games on the Amiga: Page 121

AMIGA FORMAT

SCREENPLAY



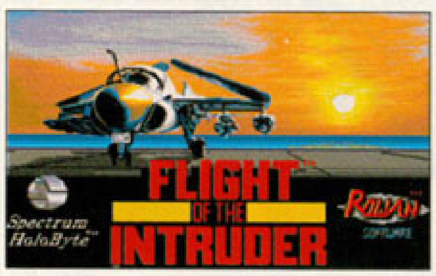
UTOPIA
Build a better future for mankind and a worse future for any bug-eyed aliens who happen to live next door. The scaffolding is up on Page 52.



SILENT SERVICE II
The US Navy gets serious in the Pacific. Who will take the voyage to the bottom of the sea the hunter or the hunted? See who's sunk on Page 68



FLAMES OF FREEDOM
MIDWINTER II
The torch of liberty burns on a lone African Isle. Can this fractal landscape, espionage wargame save the world? The fire starts on Page 82



FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER
Join the Navy, visit fascinating countries, meet friendly, waving people and drop Paveways on them. The Vietnam flashbacks start on Page 62.

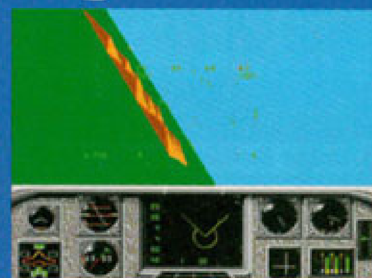
COVER DISK p17

First Samurai



Out soon on the Imageworks label, First Samurai is another triumph for Amiga graphics: but it's playable as you could wish. Explore this enormous level, listen to the fantastic sound effects, get beaten to a pulp: then turn to Page 31 to find out how it's done!

Mig 29-F



Domark make another foray into the field of flight simming with their sequel to the famously accurate MiG 29. Explore the enormous game world and fly a mission against enemy aircraft: turn to Page 124 to learn the controls of one of the world's most advanced aircraft...

Control console
Make a good start with a swish new front end for your disks

NoisePlayer
You've made tunes with NoiseTracker: now play them as stand-alone

Pools Predictor
Win at the pools with the help of this easy program: if you're lucky!

Stand-alone disk maker
The easy way to create self-booting disks to run your programs

Pic of the Month
Another graphical masterpiece, this time with an architectural theme





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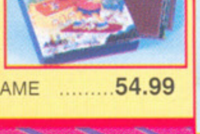


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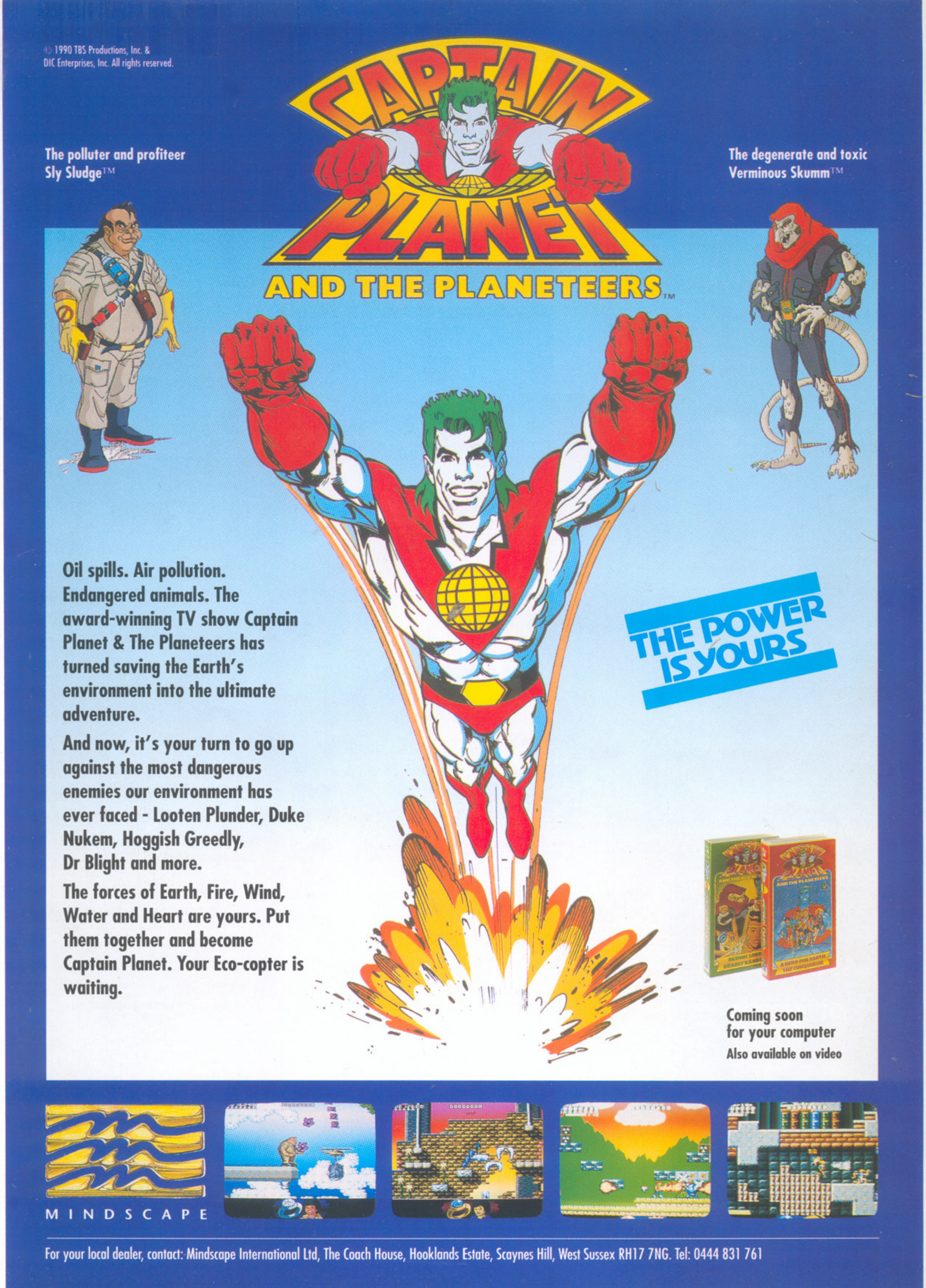
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Oil spills. Air pollution. Endangered animals. The award-winning TV show Captain Planet & The Planeteers has turned saving the Earth's environment into the ultimate adventure.
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EDUCATION EXPLOSION

Leading a huge batch of educational software releases is the new version of Database's Fun School series, Fun School 4. While Database has been renamed Europress Software, everything in the new Fun School series seems set to remain pretty much the same with another set of educational games aimed at various different age ranges. Fun School 4 will be on show for the first time at the World of Commodore show in November.

Europress Software 0625 859333

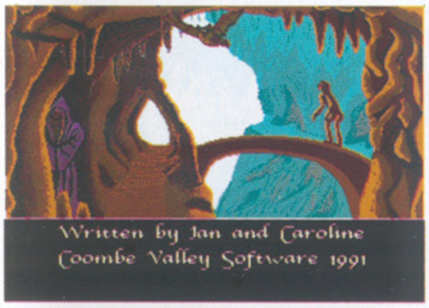
RAINBOW FUN SCHOOL



A new rival for Fun School comes from Rainbow, who have released a range of packages aiming to give high value for money. First Letters and Shapes and Colours, both for the Under 5s, are out now with Telling the Time undergoing final testing. More titles will be available soon for the 5-7 and 7-9 age groups, all at the budget price of £7.99. The company also seeks programmers for conversion work.

Rainbow Education 0392 77369/413104

SERIOUS FUN



Already proved in popularity on the BBC in schools and the Atari ST at home, two new text-and-graphic adventures from Coombe Valley Software promise National Curriculum elements. Cave Maze follows standard adventure conventions but in a kid-compatible form, testing logic, mapping and English. Maths Dragons is "a hilarious romp" covering basic maths and more. The games cost £12 each mail order.

Coombe Valley Software 0626 779695

NEW FROM SCETLANDER

Education stalwarts Scetlander have announced a name-change to simply Lander and two new Amiga packages. Count and Add, featuring a colourful dog called Shades, is developed from a BBC program widely used in schools for early maths. Spellbound will be an all-new action adventure game for ages seven and over, which promises to improve logic, memory, spelling and coordination along with the fun. Each costs £25.99. Playable demo disks of all Lander software will be available on request and in shops.

Lander 041 357 1659

WORLD OF COMMODORE SHOW CONFIRMED AS 'BIGGEST EVENT OF THE YEAR'

AMIGA FORMAT presents World of Commodore
15 - 17 November 1991
Commodore

The World of Commodore show in November now stands alone as the big chance for the software-buying public to meet the companies and individuals who create the stuff. This follows the unfortunate collapse of the Computer Entertainment Show in September, traditionally the biggest and most glamourous of the annual computer shows, which became a trade-only event at the last minute, leaving the public metaphorically, if not literally, outside looking in.

The shockwaves of the CES closure have spread throughout the UK software industry. The organisers EMAP have blamed the disappointment on a recession in the industry, a suggestion which the games software houses in particular have been keen to refute. The net result has been a collective movement to ensure the success of the World of Commodore show, with Commodore themselves especially committed to making it an exciting and memorable day for those who attend.

"World of Commodore is now certainly the biggest event of the year for Amiga owners, if not for all computer owners" comments Greg Ingham for Future Publishing, the show's organisers and publishers of Amiga Format, who will be officially sponsoring the show.

World of Commodore takes place at the new Earls Court 2 Exhibition centre on November 15-17 and is an amalgam of the previous Commodore shows with the glitzy aspects of the CES and the presence of top American firms normally associated with the Ami-Expo events. Over 30,000 people are expected to attend during the three days of the Show.

Amiga Format's editor, Damien Noonan, comments "We're very aware of the responsibility that lending our name to the show involves. We don't want to abuse the privilege of being the biggest Amiga magazine by saying "Go along", so you must decide for yourself whether the Show will be worthwhile. But we are working very hard to make it a rewarding event for all concerned, and especially the public, who are at the top of everyone's list of priorities right now."

A full guide to the events of the show and to some of the new products you will be able to see there appears on Pages 181-5 of this issue.

LAST NINJA

System 3 have announced a range of new titles which should dramatically redefine their 16 bit stance. Last Ninja III is the first and most traditional Sys' 3 game of the bunch, drawing on their 8 bit heritage for inspiration. On sale shortly it's the slickest isometric 3D bash to date with smooth animations and a more RPG feel, at last bringing the Ninja genre fully into the 16 bit field. Hot on it's heels is the postponed release of Myth, another 8 bit classic that's been beefed up to make full use of the Amiga's power and memory.

System 3 are repositioning themselves though in response to the changing Amiga games market. Evidence of this can be seen in Fuzball, a cutesy puzzler, which is clear departure from their blood and guts beat em up norm. Fuzball will be followed later (1992) by Silly Putty, a wonderfully odd looking puzzle arcade. Their platform has a further plank with the addition of Turbo Charge a high speed race special. On the C64 it received raves reviews and you'll get your first chance to try it on the January Coverdisk (AF30).

"We're developing and investing in the right kind of game for the new age of Amiga owner" System 3 Spokesman Adrian Cale boasts. "Everyone knows we are the kings on the C64, now we're aiming to take the Amiga top spot too. The games market has reached saturation point, with games at £2.99, £7.99 right through to £30.99. Now games don't just have to be good, there has to be something to lift it head and shoulders above the rest. You have to give value for money when people are spending £25. A game's not an impulse purchase anymore, it's a considered and essential purchase. We want to bring variety and quality out in our titles." The proof of the pudding will be here next month when Ninja III is reviewed.




Last Ninja 3 kicks off System 3's new range, Fuzbal, and Myth follow soon.

GOLD DISK SAY 'ACTION!'

Latest news from US quality software manufacturers Gold Disk is "a really hot video title." More than just a 'title', Video Director is a software and hardware combination that will allow you to connect a camcorder and VCR to your Amiga and use the computer to control video editing, titling and effects. Perhaps most important for the video amateur, it will be very easy to use.

Gold Disk have also announced the imminent arrival of a new high-value version of their entry-level DTP system Pagesetter. Version 3 will include a paint package as well as the text editor and "all kinds of frills" are promised, but the price will not increase. More details will follow.

Gold Disk 0101 416 602 4000

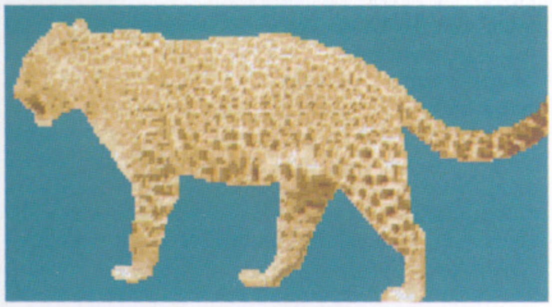
SCENERY ANIMATOR FROM NATURAL GRAPHICS



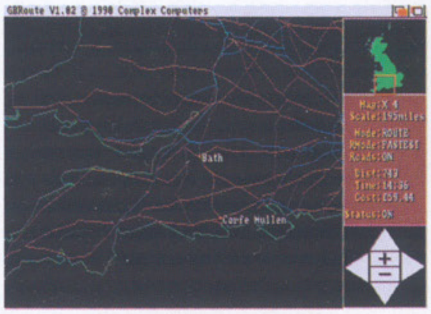
Hot on the heels of the excellent Vista Pro another landscape generation program is just about to hit the UK market. Scenery Generator from Natural Graphics promises much greater realism, including the addition of clouds. However, the program's real strength lies in its animation system. Unlike Vista Pro, where animation is simply the generation of a number of frames which are linked together later, with Scenery Generator anims can be created, viewed and modified in low resolution modes before a full, time and memory consuming animation is performed. The bad news is it only works on 68020 or higher machines with at least 2Mb of RAM. A full review will appear in next month's issue. No UK price or Distributor has yet been fixed.
Natural Graphics 0101 916 624 1436.

MORE REAL THINGS

RGB Studios – home of the Real Things animations – have are just about to release two new disks Real Things Sealife and Real Things Safari. For anyone who hasn't seen these excellent DPaint animations, the Real Things collection is high-quality clip-art animation and backgrounds that you can use in your own creations. Each pack comes with instructions on how to make the animals run in, out and around your screen. £29.95 Each disk contains around 20 different animals: Safari includes leopards, cheetah, zebras, lions and tigers while Sealife has various different sharks, stingrays and coral fish. The animations are created with the help of various 'experts' in the field, in the case of these new disks the Sealife centres and Granada TVs Survival program makers, so the actions are incredibly realistic. In addition the creatures are then put into 8- or 16-colour palettes so they can be seamlessly blended in to any DPaint animation. Look out for full details next month.
RGB Studios 0825 812666.



25M WAYS TO LEAVE YOUR LOVER



Bath to Corfe Mullen? The new GB Route Plus will give you 20 times more routes than the original.

GB Route – the first route planning program for the Amiga – has just be completely re-written and updated. GB Route Plus now features many more towns and all roads in England, Scotland and Wales, right down to B-roads. The built-in zoom features allows magnifications of up to one square mile. If you thought the first version was comprehensive with its 1.75 million possible routes, this new 1Mb version can now calculate over 25 million journeys from A to B within the British Isles. The expected cost is £79.95.
Complex Computers 0706 224 531.

ROCTEC SLIM

Roctec have announced the world's slimmest external 3.5" disk drive for the Amiga. Measuring a sylph-like three-quarters of an inch high it's not only good-looking, but well-built. For the ultimate in floppy drive one-upmanship, Roctec also do the unit in Commodore CDTV black – as far as we know the first CDTV colour-compatible drive on the UK market. Roctec may be a new name to you, but they have been making Amiga add-ons for other companies for a number of years and have just decided to sell under there own brand name. Also new from Roctec are a range of low-price genlocks and chromakey systems, bring genlocks to the Amiga for under £200 and full genlock/chromakey systems for under £400. Distribution will be through Silica.
Roctec 0101 408 379 1713/fax 0101 408 379 1897.

ZONE DISTRIBUTION

Zone Distribution have just become the exclusive UK dealers for the Dr T range of music and MIDI hardware and software. Zone have also established a UK technical support service and are inviting current users to register allowing them to use the support service.

DR T's most well-known product is the KCS 3.5 sequencer which boasts 48 track multi MIDI channel sequencing; realtime graphic editing; 16 stave notation and printing; 32 graphic faders; full SMPTE support and a resolution of up to 384 ppq. The current price is £279. As an introductory offer, Zone are also giving big discounts to users of other sequencers to change to KCS 3.5. Users of Tiger Cub, MRS or Sequencer 1 can buy KCS for £179: Music X, Master Tracks Pro and Bars and Pipes users can switch sequencers for £149.
Zone Distribution 081 766 6564/fax 081 766 6656.

PC EMULATOR OK FOR NEW A500

Silica were slightly miffed when we suggested that a new A500 with an in-built 1Mb of RAM would not run PC Emulators (News, Issue 27). "We took a lot of stick for not making our Vortex AT Once board work in the trapdoor slot" comments Andy Leaning, "but we had an eye to the future, knowing that this was on the way". So anyone who wants to turn an A500 into a PC in the future can sleep safe.
Silica 081 309 1111

HAM-E TAKES OFF WITH SOFTWARE SUPPORT



Low cost, high colour, HAM-E. Two new paint packages should strengthen the appeal of this amazing system.

Reaction to HAM-E, the extraordinary low-price 24-bit graphics system reviewed last issue, has been very positive in the US. Latest software support to arrive for it will be HAM-E-compatible versions of paint packages Spectracolor and The Graphics Workshop. Both promise an excellent alternative to the paint program that comes free with HAM-E, currently the only weak link in the system.
Checkmate 071 923 0658.

WANNA BE ON TELLY?

The first ever national TV programme covering computer games is called Gamesmaster and starts showing on Channel 4 on December 31. Thing is, if you want to be on telly Amiga Format can now bring you the opportunity to go to the recording of the show in London, which will run for about five days from November 4. Simply call 071 712 9536 or 071 712 9533 and ask about tickets for the recordings.

WANNA SEE THE AMIGA ON TELLY?

Chris Blackwell, the young cartoonist whose work was shown in Amiga Format, will be appearing on Rolf Harris's Cartoon Club, showing off his skills on the Amiga, on October 17. Don't miss it!

A1000 RISES FROM THE ASHES

Are you an Amiga old hand with an A1000? Phoenix Microtechnologies in Keswick South Australia have just released a complete motherboard replacement to bring old machines bang up to date.The new motherboards making new super-motherboards for A1000s. This gives you internal disk drive and RS-232 connectors; an A2000 expansion slot; an A2000 video slot a maths co-processor and up to 8Mb of RAM. To fit the motherboard is pretty simple, although it does require care as you have to transfer several chips over to the new motherboard. Cost is A$945 (about £450). Phoenix can also supply hard drives and all mounting bits required to bring your A1000 up to date.
Phoenix Microtechnologies 010 618 293 8752/fax 010 618 293 8814.

PHILIPS

LAND THE F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER FREE WITH THE Nº1 GAMES MONITOR.



The US Air Force F19 Stealth Fighter.

Invisible to radar, and all ordinary defence systems.

Impossible to miss on a Philips 8833/II colour monitor.

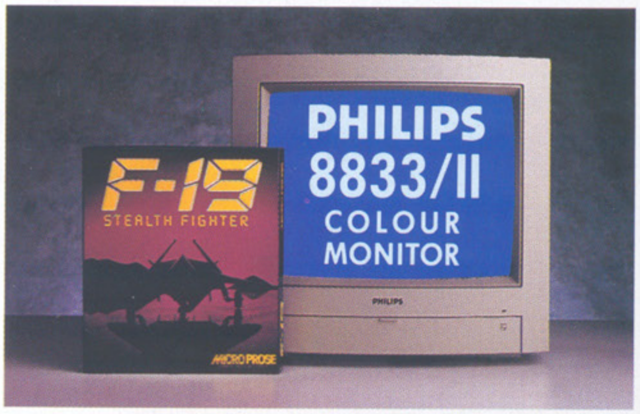
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Featuring superb reproduction, stereo sound and hi-definition picture. Suddenly, the best games look even better.

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Ask your 8833/II monitor stockist for details – take off now!



Offer ends 31-12-1991.

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GOLD DISK - Serious Software For The Amiga.

When it comes to productivity software, Gold Disk can provide everything you need. We are the leaders and we got there by providing the most professional products for the job. If you want to unleash some of the real power of your Amiga computer, we can help. If you're ready to get serious, you're ready for Gold Disk.



Professional Page 2.0

the best gets better

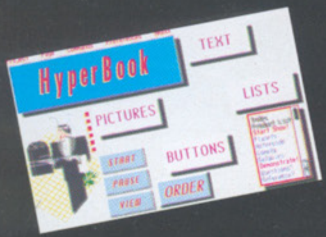
Desktop Publishing. For everything from a note to a newsletter to advertisements like this, Professional Page 2.0 can make your task easier, and your output more professional. Outline fonts. Text and graphic rotation. Style tags. Built-in word processor/ spell checker. Pantone and 24-bit colour support. And continual refinement keeps Professional Page on top. "...The best all round workhorse has got to be Pro Page 2.0. It's solid and totally trouble free." - Amiga Format 3/91.



ShowMaker

the complete desktop video solution

ShowMaker makes it easy to create exciting video productions right on the desktop. Whether you simply need to sequence animations, or you need to integrate full motion video with Toaster effects and MIDI, ShowMaker can make you a professional. And it's PAL compatible. "For independent producers, ShowMaker is a big step forward." - Television Broadcast magazine 7/90.



HyperBook

free-form personal information manager

HyperBook is the ultimate Amiga tool for quickly and easily managing information and creating interactive presentations. Simply by pointing and clicking you can create applications like personalized appointment calenders, business presentations with interactive charts and graphs, and free-form educational teaching "books". "Value: Excellent. Nothing else on the market comes close." - Amiga Format 4/91.



Gold Disk Office

complete integrated business package

Gold Disk Office is everything you need to succeed in business or set up a great home office: Powerful Spreadsheet, Graphing program, Database, Word Processor with English Spell Checker, and Desktop Publishing program. All the programs in Gold Disk Office are designed to work together and take full advantage of the Amiga's powerful multitasking. "...A package of five separate and powerful business programs that are as easy to use as they are to buy." - Amiga World 2/91.

These are just four of a complete and growing line of professional grade software from Gold Disk. Also look for The Advantage spreadsheet, MediaShow presentation package, PageSetter home publisher, TransWrite high performance word processor, Gold Disk Type outline fonts, and others.

If your dealer doesn't have the Gold Disk product you need, tell him to contact these authorized distributors:

Centresoft/IBD	021 625 3388
HBM	0753 686000
SDL	081 300 3399

GOLD DISK

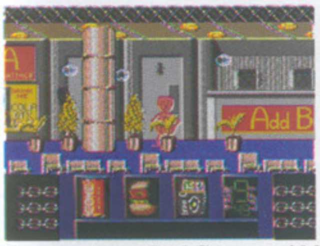
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...GOLD DISK Has Everything You Need.

INOVATRONICS OPUS

Tired of waiting for Workbench for your machine? InOVA tronics – makers of the multimedia package, CanDO – have just released Directory Opus, a new multi-function directory utility. In addition to all the usual workbench actions Opus allows you to execute files, view IFF pics, brushes, anims and text files and play sounds simply by double-clicking on the name of the file. It also has over 100 user definable buttons, supports ARexx, has on-line help for all features (including AmigaDOS error codes), has memory and CPU usage meters and is er, pretty impressive. Expect to see a full review in next month's ish. UK distributors will be Silica.
INOVA tronics 0101 214 340 4991.
Silica 081 309 1111

ADDWARE TO SHAKE WORLD?

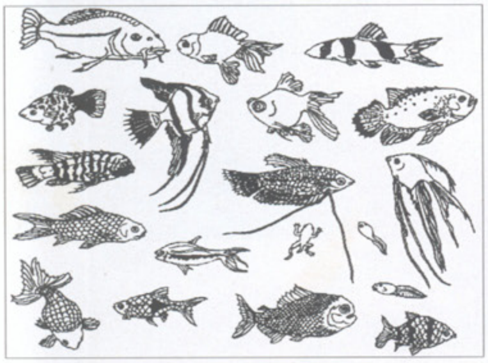


Will Adware change the way that software is produced? Industry veterans Paul Cooper and Mel Croucher get serious about shareware.

Games veterans Paul Cooper and Mel Croucher are set to launch a new shareware style software house called Addware which they hope will shake the traditional world of software production. It's novel twist though is that the games will carry prizes for each format – like a trip around the world! – for the first player to finish. What's more, because the aim of Addware is to spread the software, copying is strictly encouraged. To this end there are also prizes for the folks who distributed the game to the finisher. Of course to win the prize you'll have to have registered with Addware. Airmania will the be the first title to hit the streets and PD circuits this October, but if you want more information in advance write to Addware PO Box 1992, Southampton, SO9 7HX.

HIGH-QUALITY-LOW PRICE CLIP ART FOR THE AMIGA

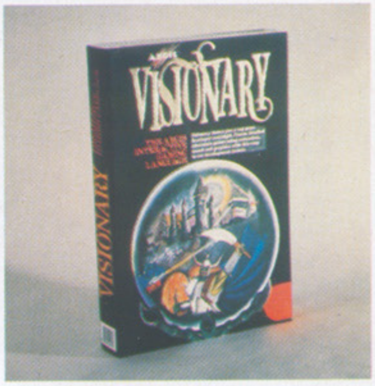
Artworks has just launched three high-quality clip-art disks: Pets, Trees and Cottages, Castles and Churches. All are black and white line art drawn especially for the Amiga and so avoiding the problems of making scanned images look clean and crisp.Each disk contains between 120 and 240 images and costs £6.99. Artworks intend to extend their collection to include animals, prehistoric life, aircraft, signs and symbols. Next year they plan to produce structured clip art for use with Pro Draw, Pro Page and the like.
Artworks 04698 8138.



High-quality Amiga clip art for budget prices. Artworks have over 600 images availiable for less than £21.

AEGIS VISIONARY

There have been lots of 'write your own adventure game' programs for the Amiga, but a new system from Oxxi, promises to set a new standard for 'home made' interactive games. Aegis Visionary allows you to link text, high-quality graphics and sound together in you own adventures – big adventures. A game can have 65,000 rooms with 32 attributes per room; 65,000 objects including non-player characters that can interact with players; 128, 000 variables; 25 IFF screens, 25 IFF sounds and 25 IFF graphic gadgets on screen at any one time. Aegis Visionary also supports HAM, IFF-ANIM, MED/MIDI music and NTSC or PAL. Although the program has its own high-speed compiler and debugger. Oxxi say that the interface is designed to let you get on with the creative process. See next month's issue for a full review. UK distributors will be Centresoft.
Oxxi 0101 213 427 1227/fax 0101 213 427 0971
Centresoft 021 625 3388.

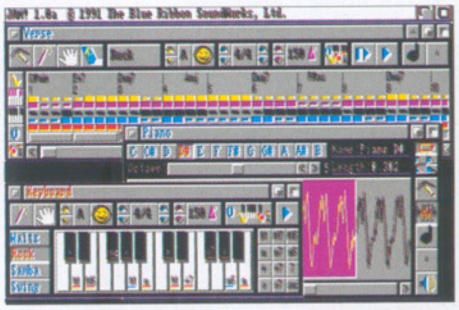


Wave goodbye to naff PD advantures with creaky parsers and gruesome graphics.

THE BLUE RIBBON JAM!

The Blue Ribbon SoundWorks – makers of Bars and Pipes Professional – have just announced the release of a new music software package for the Amiga. Jam! is designed to help those of us who aren't sophisticated musicians produce complex tunes. Amongst other things at can automatically create rhythmic patterns, chord progressions, and accompaniments at the press of a key in almost any musical style.. It also allows you to play more than four samples at the same time. More accomplished musicians will be glad to know it multi-tasks with Bars and Pipes Pro and data can be exchanged between the two. The UK price for Jam! has not been set yet, but the dollar price will be $129.

The Blue Ribbon SoundWorks has also announced that a Bars and Pipes accessory that allows the program to directly support SunRize Industries high-end 12- and 16-bit sampling cards. This works by allowing the user to run the SunRize Studio 16 software from within Bars and Pipes Pro.
The Blue Ribbon SoundWorks 01010 404 377 1514.



Do you have the desire to create music, but all the artistic skill of NKOTB? Jam! could be for you.

POWERMONGER BUSTED

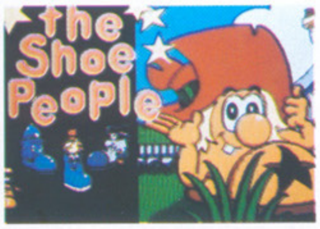
With Powermonger: World War One Edition on the horizon, Bullfrog have written and released a tips book for the original strategy classic. Written in a novel style it's a complete conquering crib sheet and as it's put together by the same folks who actually designed the game there should be some real dirty tricks on display. The paperback version will be on sale any day now, priced £7.99 and should be available from the same shop that started you on your conquests in the first place.



Programmers Bullforg spill their secrets on how to play Powermonger. The ultimate accessory for all megalomanical conquers of the 195 islands. A snip at only £7.99!

GREMLIN EDUCATIONAL GAMES

Gremlin have picked up one of the big educational licenses with The Shoe People, TV cartoon characters popular with younger kids. Shoe People games will found a new label called First Class, with the initial release being First Class with the Shoe People for 4-6 year olds. In the multi-activity style this will cost £25.99 and feature six games testing all kinds of basic skills, with the emphasis on easy access and increasing difficulty.
First Class 0742 753423

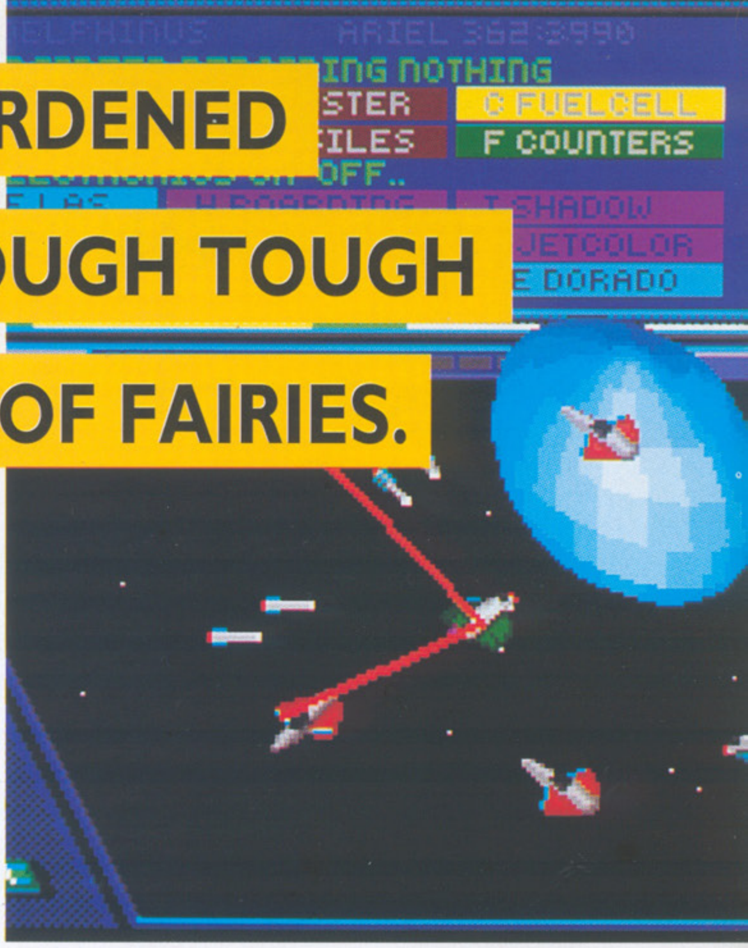






Most of us in the Amiga Format office are slightly to old to know who (or what) the Shoe People are. Happily they're quite easy to spot as they are basically shoes with faces that talk. Not the kind of thing you can miss, really.

TAKE COMMAND OF HARDENED SPACE CREWS, SOME ROUGH TOUGH SAILORS AND A BUNCH OF FAIRIES.



In *Hard Nova*™ you take charge of a group of space adventurers who are not only hard, but also genuinely nasty. They're the meanest mercenaries in the galaxy, willing to smuggle, assassinate and run guns. So unscrupulous, they'd sell their own granny's planet to the highest bidder.

What's more, they're armed with over 60 pieces of the most evil weaponry - hi-tech lasers, missiles, Gyro-pikes and computer automated jammers.

The crew of *StarFlight® II* may be rather less shady, but they are just as well armed. They have to be, to fight off revolting aliens as you set about exploring over 500 planets and 150 star systems. Each planet is different, some freezing, some awash with boiling lava. Starflight II is also completely open-ended, so there is no "correct way" to finish the game.



Back down to earth, or rather on the mountainous seas of the South Atlantic, in *StrikeFleet*™ you are in total command of a large task force. Your fleet consists of cruisers, destroyers, frigates, helicopters and even hydrofoils.

You are being attacked by deadly Kingfisher missiles and heavily armed attack subs and your fleet is looking to you to make split second decisions that could mean the difference between a hero's welcome and a Court Martial.

Finally, there is *Lord of the Rings*,™ J.R.R.Tolkien's epic fantasy classic, brought to weird and wonderful life by Interplay. You are Frodo and your task is to protect the one true ring from the clutches of the evil Lord Sauron.

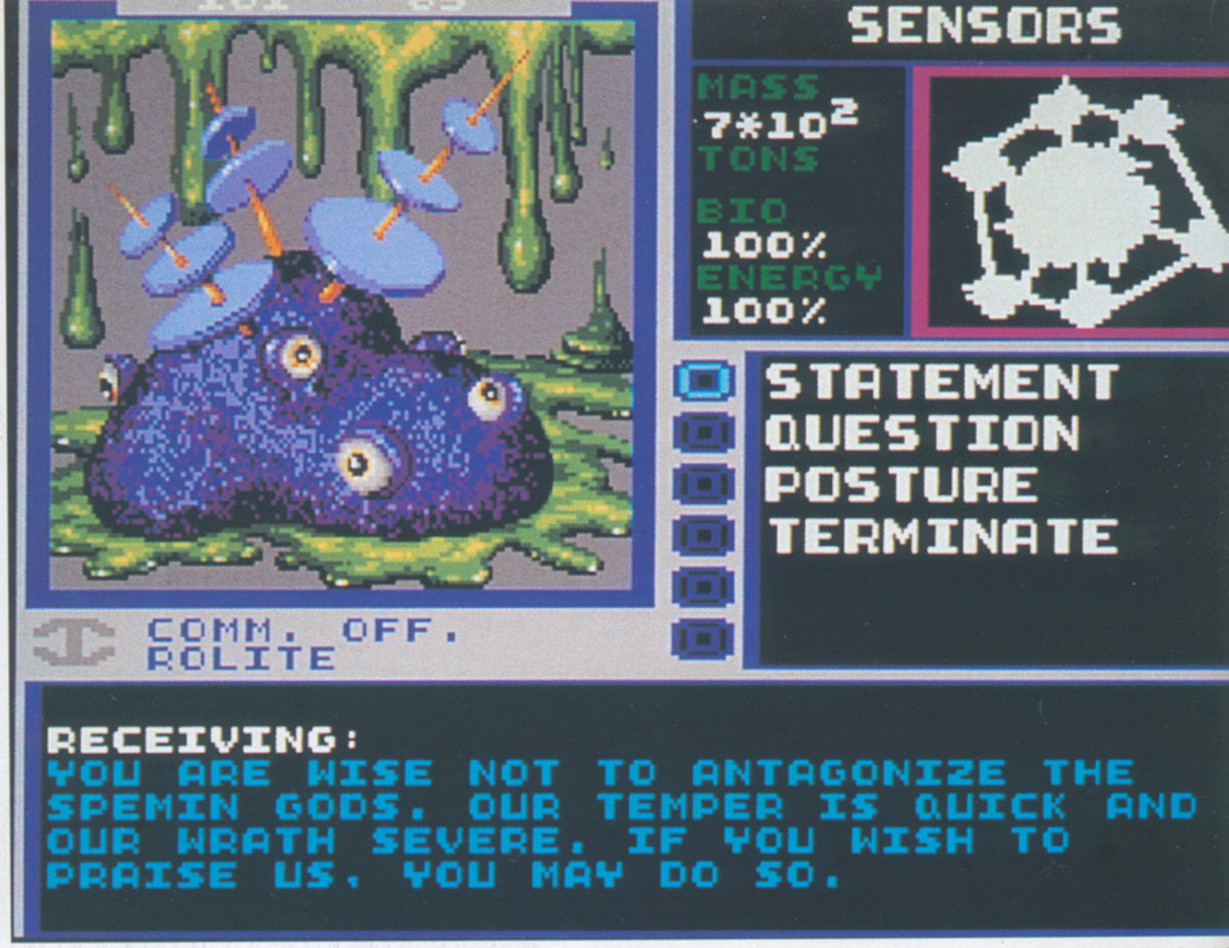
But first, you must recruit followers from among the hobbits, dwarves and wizards to fight dangerous enemies such as orcs and trolls, evil spirits and vampires.

If you can't find these games at your favourite retailer, contact our Direct Sales Department at Electronic Arts, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Berks SL3 8YN. Telephone 0753 549442.





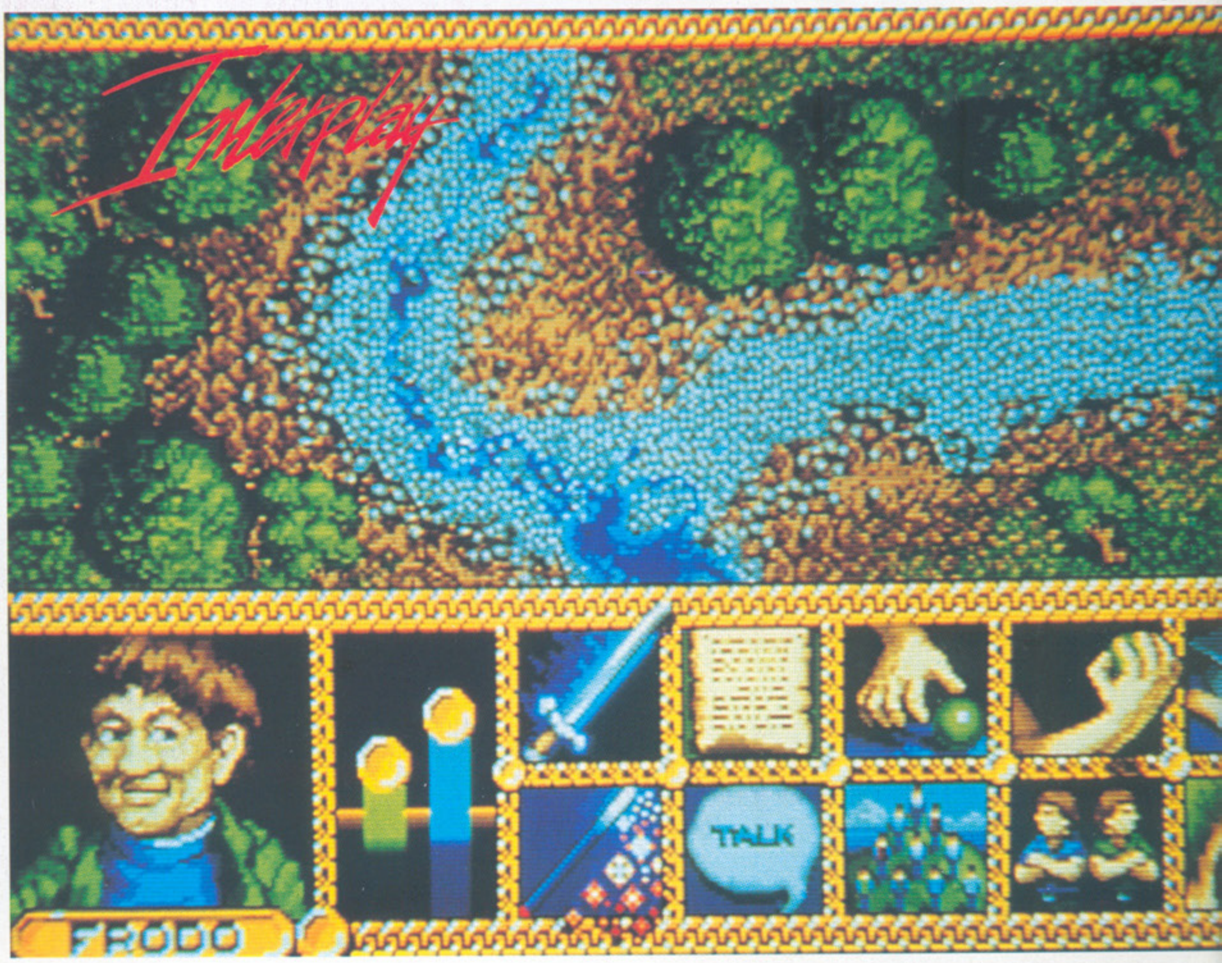
Hard Nova



StarFlight II



StrikeFleet



Interplay's Lord of the Ring

MIND CONTROL...

let your imagination rule the screen



AEGIS VISIONARY

Enjoy playing computer adventure games? Think about the thrill of creating them! Your own Magicians, Monsters, Heroes... as many games as you can imagine. Create your adventure in plain English, even sell your adventure games–you don't need Aegis Visionary to run your games once they are finished.

IN THE BEGINNING...

Hold Everything!
Now Aegis Visionary can make you a top game developer overnight. Feel the thrill of creating your own adventure games. Aegis Visionary makes all this possible now with a revolutionary, powerful, easy-to-use new language that anyone can use. With Aegis Visionary, the Universe is yours!

You know you have it in you.
You've always felt you could design incredible adventure games, even better than some you bought. Aegis Visionary is much easier to use than standard programming languages.

This program was designed specifically for the creation of text, sound, and **animated graphic adventure games.** Visionary has a memory-efficient high-speed compiler and fully interactive debugger. With Aegis Visionary, you do not need to know the nitty-gritty details of how the system works. You can concentrate on the creative process of writing your adventure games. Aegis Visionary's language is designed to be as much like English as possible.

Superior Graphic Support
Aegis Visionary offers more than 20 commands just for setting up graphic screens, rendering images into those screens, and providing special effects and user interaction. The program provides a number of facilities for color cycling, fades and wipes for professional transitions from screen to screen.

Your games can have:
- 65,000 rooms with 32 attributes per room
- 65,000 objects including non-playing characters who can interact with players
- 32 attributes per object
- 65,000 subroutines
- 65,000 ACTION blocks
- 128,000 variables

Plus:
- Stereo sound
- 25 IFF graphic screen buffers
- 25 IFF sound buffers
- 50 IFF on-screen graphic gadgets per screen
- 50 prepositions (user declared)
- 10 articles (user declared)
- 70 powerful programming commands
- 19 mathematical operations
- Redefinable function keys
- Larger-than-page scrolling
- Instant image blitting
- Speech output
- Comprehensive user's manual

Aegis Visionary supports:
- Total mouse-driven adventure games
- HAM (Aegis SpectraColor)
- Standard IFF Images
- Amiga IFF-ANIM format
- Aegis AudioMaster III sequenced sounds
- MED/MIDI Music
- NTSC/PAL compatible

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Coverdisk

If you get stuck using the Coverdisk, fear not. These pages are designed to help you through the demos and making it a pleasure, not a pain.

GETTING STARTED

After performing the usual actions (turning your machine on, inserting the disk) you will get to the Control Console menu. Control Console is a program in its own right, authored by Alexander Kerr, but right now all you want to do is use the disk, yes?

If you have a 512K machine, then you will find that running the *First Samurai* demo is a bit long-winded: rather than clicking on the option, you have to reboot (press CTRL and the two keys either side of the space-bar). Keep the CTRL and D keys pressed, and the words "Break – CLI" will appear. You may need to re-boot a couple of times. Then type:

```
Samurai_demo
```



It's fairly simple to use the Coverdisk, just so long as you have 1Mb or more of memory.

Then press the Return key. The demo will then load – sorry for this, but it's too big to run any other way. To avoid this situation, it might be a good idea to get a 512K memory expansion.

For those with larger Amigas, all you have to do is click on any option, and it will load. It's not possible to actually use any of the utilities straight from the Coverdisk – you'll have to load up Workbench first.

NoisePlayer

David Watson

PAL/NTSC

Since *NoiseTracker* appeared on a Coverdisk, we have had numerous requests from readers for a program which can play the music modules that they've created. Well, this program can do just that – there's even a full list of instructions on the disk for creating a music disk.

NTSC users, you should be aware that your systems run about 15 per cent faster than PAL ones, so don't be surprised if PAL NoiseTracker modules have a faster tempo. Anyway, for the low down on using it, simply turn the page.



Of course, we can't let you hear what NoisePlayer sounds like, but this is what it looks like when activated through the CLI.

First Samurai

Vivid Image/ImageWorks

PAL/NTSC

One of the most outstanding game demos we've seen in a long time – and we've seen a few. Featuring loads of animation and over the top oriental sounds, it's got a hook that will have you playing it for hours on end. Full instructions on P30.



One of the prettiest, meanest demos we've ever had, First Samurai will have you cussing and coming back for more

StandAloneDiskMaker

Simon MacMullen

PAL/NTSC

The coverdisk has featured some of the best utilities around (Hacktrick 60Hz and TextEngine were especially popular) but many readers have complained that they have to go through the hassle of loading Workbench first to get at them.

Of course, it's possible to put utilities on different disks if you know how, but for those who haven't a clue how to go about this tricky task, this script file will do the hard work for you. It doesn't work with everything mind you, but to find out more just flick the page and read on.



Pic of the Month

Chris Williams

PAL/NTSC

Well, it's a simple picture postcard of a French Chateaux, but it features some really thoughtful detail – notice the different shades used for the stonework shadows. Can you do better? We accept all Amiga art entries. Send yours to: Pic of the Month, *Amiga Format*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW



Yes, you too can dive bomb enemy airbases whilst being shot at, in the comfort of your own armchair.

MiG 29M Super Fulcrum

Simis/Domark

1Mb PAL only

When a plane has a reputation like the MiG 29, there's people queuing up just to look at it, let alone fly it. Now here's your chance to do just that – it's not just combat, there are some live targets to chase too. NTSC users will miss a slice of the action (the bottom 30 lines of the screen or so). Read all about it on P124.

Pools Predictor

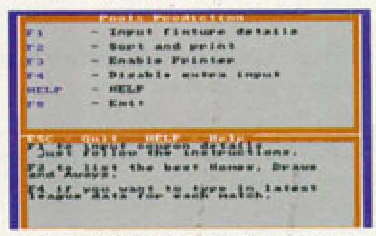
D Guest

PAL only

All right, this works on all Amigas but is only vaguely useful if you do the Pools . Apparently using a system based on several years experience, it's on the Coverdisk because it's so simple to use.

First, turn on and load Workbench. After the drive light has gone out, take out Workbench and insert the Coverdisk (multiple floppy-drive owners need just put it in an external drive). Double click on the Coverdisk icon, then again on the Pools icon.

Single-drive owners will need to re-insert Workbench at this point – wait for the machine to ask for this, as pre-empting it can cause problems. After a couple of seconds the program will finish loading: check out the next page for more detail on using it.



Ever wanted to take some of the guesswork out of filling in your coupon? Do give *Pools Predictor* a look.

Coverdisk Utilities

Back by popular demand, we present four utilities this month to help make life just that little bit easier.

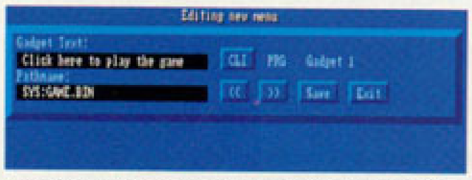
Control Console

Usage: CLI only

There is a lot of menuing software around – programs to stick at the beginning of a floppy disk to allow access to more than one program. Normally, you can only put one auto running program on each disk, so a menuing program is very useful. Get Set Go! and Menu Master have been put on the Coverdisk before, but this is better than both of them.

For a start, it's both PAL and NTSC compatible (although American users will miss the bottom line of the menu, due to NTSC having fewer display lines). The main feature of it is that you can edit the menu selections from inside the program, making it very easy to setup a disk.

There is a full tutorial on the disk, but I'll outline the principles here. For a start, you must create a disk with all the program files on that you're going to use, and it must have an s, c, devs and libs directories on it. Console will not work without the mathieeedoubbas.library file in the libs directory, and it can need the ram-handler in the devs library. Similarly, the Run and Execute commands must be in the c directory.



Control Console has a built in editing system for designing menus

Install the disk, and boot up with it. The machine will stop at the CLI prompt, because there is no startup-sequence file. Just type Console and press return, and the program will start. Because you didn't specify a menu file, Console will automatically let you enter one in.

Actually using the program is fairly easy – mainly it uses icons and the mouse, rather than depending on you typing lots of obscure menu commands. Just enter the prompt it will display, and where the program is located on the disk (it's labelled as Pathname). When that option is selected, that program will be run.

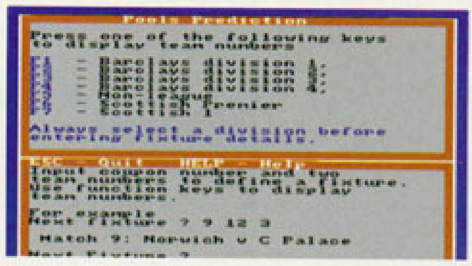
Of course, there's more to it than that: Console can also display text messages to explain the disk, and will also execute AmigaDOS scripts. Have fun with Console, but if you do find it useful, remember that it is shareware and you should send your

Pools Predictor

Usage: CLI or Icon

OK, it's a fair cop – the on-disk documentation is sparse to say the least. For those that prefer a computer generated guess to a human one, here goes. To run Pools Predictor, you need to load Workbench first. Then take out the Workbench disk, put the Coverdisk in and double click on its icon. Double click again on the Pools icon, and the program will load (after a couple of disk swaps).

Using it is fairly straightforward. You have to input the coupon number, the home team and the away team. To take away some of the hassle, the computer expects three numbers separated by a space. Press the F1 key to start inputting matches. Note that you have to select the correct division (by pressing one of the function keys – the program tells you which division's which) and then the team number. Note team 94 is blank, for non-league sides that occasionally appear on coupons.



Entering data into *Pools Predictor* is fairly simple – just hit the function keys to view the numbers for the teams, then enter the coupon number followed by the home and away teams numbers.

Those with a printer can turn it on (by pressing F3 at the main menu) to echo all the predictions straight onto paper. Once all team entries have been made, press ESC to return to the main menu, and hit F2 to do the final print report.

As it stands, *Pools Predictor* has a database of the 90/91 season. If you want, you can include this season's results to fine tune the predictions a bit (Arsenal supporters take note). To do this, after entering each match, you have to enter the home and away team's statistics to date. The computer prints this as W, D, L, F, A: these stand for Wins, Draws, Losses, goals For and goals Against.

Don't be afraid to disregard the computer's prediction and enter a couple of your own wild cards – after all, if every reader of *AF* used this program the dividend for successful entries would be extremely small.

NoisePlayer

Usage: CLI only

For those musical types out there who have been asking for a program to play NoiseTracker modules, here it is. NoisePlayer will play back such modules, but please note that it takes some work with the CLI or Shell to get the whole thing working.

The NoisePlayer.doc file is a simple step by step set of instructions for copying NoisePlayer and your modules onto a separate disk which can autoboot. That way, you don't have to load NoiseTracker or be a machine code whizzkid to show off your music.

I do apologise if you find using *NoisePlayer* tricky (first-time users should read the Beginning CLI article on P225) but there's more you can do with *NoisePlayer* than meets the eye. Because it multitasks (works with other programs) you can play music modules while using other programs, depending on how much memory you've got.

The reason why it's CLI based is to make it as flexible as possible. NoisePlayer has a number of exit modes (ways to turn it off), including the usual left mouse button, hitting the escape key, or just continuing until the music is over.

Putting the whole thing in a user friendly environment would have made it much bigger, meaning you could put less modules on a disk.

WON'T PRINT?

If you're having difficulty printing out the documentation on the disk, I must point out that there is no printer support on the Coverdisk itself. The necessary files have to be removed, in order to fit as much on the disk as possible.

The good news however is that you can still print them out. All you have to do is load Workbench first, take out the Workbench disk and insert the Coverdisk. Double click on the Coverdisk icon, and then on any of the documentation icons. Select 'Print File' from the bottom of the screen, and after a couple of disk swaps the file will print. Sorry for the confusion.

StandAloneDiskMaker

Usage: CLI or Icon

Finally, a little script file to help all those who want to put former Coverdisk utilities on separate disks, to save loading Workbench first. It's easy to use and takes all the typing hassle away from this task. Be warned that it does take its time.

Full instructions are as usual included on the disk, but here's a brief precis. First, you load up Workbench. Once that's finished, pop this Coverdisk in, double click on its icon and select (click once) on the SADM icon. Move the mouse to the RAM disk, and let go.



It's very easy to use the StandAloneDiskMaker, just drag it and the utility into the RAM disk, rename the utility and double click on the SADM icon

Next, take out this month's Coverdisk, and insert the disk with the particular utility on it. Again, double click on the disk icon, and drag the utility's icon to the RAM disk.

Double click on the RAM disk, and rename the utility as Auto. Double click on the SADM icon and have a blank disk handy.


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Using Your Coverdisk

1. Always write-protect your disk. Move the tab so a hole is showing.
2. Copy the Coverdisk and use the copy, not the original. This may sound like a complicated task suitable only for techno buffs, but it's surprisingly simple to do, just follow the simple instructions for copying the disk which are given below.
3. Read the instructions when using the programs.

Backing up your Disk

First turn on your machine and load Workbench (one of the disks everyone gets with their Amiga). Once the Workbench screen appears and the drive light goes out, remove your Workbench disk and insert the Coverdisk. Once the drive light has gone out your screen should look like this screen.



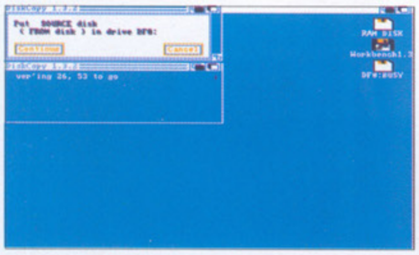
1

Next, move the mouse pointer to the Coverdisk icon and click once with the left mouse button – the icon will highlight. Press the right mouse button and keep it down. The words 'Workbench', 'Disk' and 'Special' will appear at the top left of the screen. Move the pointer to the word 'Workbench', and a menu will drop down. Select the 'Duplicate' option: you should have got this far.



2

The computer will ask you to insert the Workbench disk again – it needs to read the command to copy disks. After you've done this, a boxed message (a requester box) will appear, asking you to insert the source disk. Insert the Coverdisk once again and click on the 'OK' option with the left mouse button.



3

After the computer has read part of the Coverdisk, it will once again display a requester box asking for the destination disk to be put into df0:. Put the disk that you want the Coverdisk copied to in the drive. This procedure of swapping disks will continue until all of the disk has been duplicated.



4

Eventually, you will end up with two Coverdisk icons, one has the name 'Copy of Coverdisk 22'. Click once on this with the left mouse button to highlight it. Bring down the 'Workbench' menu again (by holding down the right mouse button and moving the mouse pointer to the top left) but this time select 'Rename' from the menu. Let go of the right mouse button to select the Rename option.



5

The name of the disk will appear in an elongated box – you don't need to insert Workbench again because the Rename command is built into the machine. Press the 'Del' key (which is next to the 'Help' key) to remove the 'Copy of' part, and press the Return key to make the computer put the new name to copy.



6

Disk not working?

We duplicate over 160,000 disks every month. Out of all those, obviously a few will be faulty. If the disk or any of the programs will not load or run properly, there may be a problem. Don't panic!

First try using the *DiskDoctor* utility on your Workbench disk to rescue it before sending it off for a replacement. In-full details of *DiskDoctor* can be found in the user's manual that came with your machine.

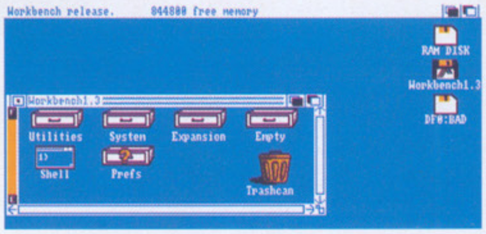
However, if your Coverdisk is faulty, you should send it back INCLUDING AN SAE for a free replacement within a month of the cover date to:

Amiga Format November Disk
Disk Copy Labs
Unit A, Westmarch
London Road
Daventry
Northants
NN11 4SA

Remember to include that stamped, addressed envelope!

The easy Way

There is another way to back up your disk, but because it involves using the typed-in instructions of the CLI or Shell, a lot of people are wary of it. Don't be! simply follow this step-by-step guide and you can't go wrong!



1 Load your Workbench disk. Open the disk, find the icon that says Shell or CLI and double-click on it.



2 When the Shell window appears and the drive light is out, type in:

```
Diskcopy from DF0: to DF0:
```

and press the Return key.



3. The Amiga will now ask you to insert the 'source' disk. It means the disk you want to copy, so put the Coverdisk in the drive and press the Return key.



4. Wait for a while and it will read all the information off the Coverdisk, telling you how far it has got. Then it will ask you to insert the "Destination" disk. Put the disk you want to copy your Coverdisk onto in the drive and press the Return key. Note that the disk does not need to be formatted already.



5. Put the source disk and destination disk in a couple more times when the Amiga asks for them. When it says "Diskcopy Finished" just type in:

```
endcli
```

to get out of the Shell or CLI. You may have to put the Workbench disk in again. Now your copy is ready!

DISK PROBLEMS?

If you have a problem with the disk – and you're sure the disk is in full working order – then you may need a little help. If you ring us on any Tuesday, and ask to speak to Pat McDonald, he will do his best to help you. Please understand, giving this sort of advice is time-consuming and we are very busy people, so only call if you really have to and do be considerate if we can't talk to you just then. If the problem is particularly complex it is better to send it to us in written detail. It will then be dealt with in the Workbench pages of the magazine.

BE CAREFUL!

We have done our best to check that the programs on the Amiga Format Coverdisk are simple to use and have no known viruses. We cannot usually answer complex telephone queries on the software (see the Disk Problems? box) and we do not accept liability for any consequences of using the numerous programs that are on the disk.

COPYRIGHT

Unless it is specifically stated, the programs on the Coverdisk are not in the public domain and the copyright remains with the author of the program.

Because some of the programs on the coverdisk are not PD, selling or distributing them without the author's specific permission is against the laws of copyright.

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(Evenings)..

My program name is ....

....

Approximate total size of files in k.......(we cannot use grams larger than 200K; shorter submissions, under 100K, stand the best chance of publication). It is a:

- ☐ Game
- ☐ Business utility
- ☐ Music program
- ☐ Novelty
- ☐ Technical tool
- ☐ Art program
- ☐ Educational
- ☐ Other

Brief description..

....

....

Checklist **(please tick):**

- ☐ Stamped-addressed envelope for return
- ☐ README.DOC explanation file on disk
- ☐ Printout of README.DOC file (if possible)
- ☐ Name, address, machine type written on label
- ☐ Disk certified virus free

IMPORTANT Please sign this declaration:

This program is submitted for publication by *Amiga Format*. It is wholly my own work and I agree to indemnify Future Publishing against any possible legal action should copyright problems arise.

Signed ....

....

Date..

WE WANT YOUR PROGRAM!

If you've got any programs which you think other readers would find useful, interesting or amusing, we'd very much like to know about them.

1. Make sure your program is simple and fool-proof to use. Test it for all those bugs which you are sure you fixed: there are always more.

2. Create a file called README.DOC on the disk which explains exactly how to use your program. Try to make it humorous and informative – a good README.DOC gives a program a better chance of going in.

3. Fill in this form, sign it, and send it, with your disk (and a printout of the README.DOC file if possible), to: Coverdisk Software, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, BATH BA1 2AP. You could win a share of up to £1,000 in prize money.

What will you cha

FORMULA ONE

GRAND PRIX

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be one of those 26 drivers, revving on the grid, waiting for the Green light to start you off on a mayhem of crashing gears, smoke, roaring engines and burning rubber as the Grand Prix season races off into another year? Well, now you can strap on your seat belt! MicroProse and Geoff Crammond, the author of 'Revs' and 'Stunt Car Racer', have teamed up to engineer the only complete Formula One Grand Prix simulation.

MicroProse Grand Prix is crammed full of features: 16 undulating 3D circuits from the street tracks of Phoenix and Adelaide to the glamorous Monaco harbourside and the choice of 26 independently controlled cars out of the current teams; from Jordan and Brabham to Williams and Ferrari.

Study the circuit in practice, adjust your car to achieve peak performance, then roar away for your fastest qualifying lap time to put you ahead of your rivals on the starting grid. Overtake the other cars by slipstreaming or outbraking them into corners, then watch them in your wing mirrors as they try to catch you. Be careful, you might have to avoid a shunt that's just happened around the next bend. It's tough, it's challenging, it's exciting, it's the most realistic Grand Prix simulation ever.

- Authentic cockpit controls with radio and adjustable wing mirrors.
- Realistic tyre and brake wear; judge when to make that vital pit stop.
- View the racing action from television cameras located all over every track and replay your greatest triumphs and worst disasters.
- Unpredictable weather patterns; the race may start dry but a sudden cloud burst may force you to change your tyres and style of driving.
- Four levels of difficulty, from novice to potential Champion, make this a challenge to all drivers.





- From the back of the starting grid to World Champion, MicroProse Formula One Grand Prix, it's all there bar the shouting!

Formula One Grand Prix will be thundering into all good software stores soon for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC & Compatibles.

MicroProse Simulation Software is available at all good software stores. If you experience difficulty in obtaining any of the MicroProse titles they can be ordered directly from us at MicroProse, Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos. GL8 8LD. Tel: 0666 504326







MicroProse Simulation software -Y

COMMODORE AMIGA AND ATARI ST SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN. ACTUAL SHOTS MAY VARY BY FORMAT.

nge into tonight?



MICROPROSE

GOLF

Computer owners who like golf have been fortunate to have a wide range of games to choose from. Now, with MicroProse Golf, they've also got the definitive simulation. If you've been playing around, stop; and start playing a proper round.

MicroProse Golf accurately recreates the fairways and greens of each hole using stunning 3-dimensional technology which allows you to travel anywhere around the course. You can even follow the ball as it flies through the air and watch from numerous selectable TV viewing positions.

Accurately modelled club and ball dynamics take account of club selection, ball and foot position and swing, with varying course conditions adding to the huge range of effects that you can witness at first hand. MicroProse Golf is so true to life that it will actually improve your own golf game!

- Realistic 3-D landscape allows you free movement around the whole course.
- Animated "Televisual" presentation and camera positions, including a unique follow-the-ball option.
- Six challenging courses, each in a different style, including 'links', 'woodland' and 'water' courses.
- Options to change stance, swing, tee and ball positions and see their effects on your shots before, during and after each stroke.
- Varying ground and atmospheric conditions.
- Player profiles which change over time, including a full handicap system.
- A dozen game types including strokeplay, matchplay, best ball, skins and a full tournament option for 1 to 4 human players.
- Customizable computer opponents and replay facilities.
- Statistical and graphical hole-by-hole analysis of your performance.
- Easy to learn tutorial and 150 page manual packed with hints and tips to help your own game.



MicroProse Golf will be teeing-off soon at all good software stores for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC & Compatibles.

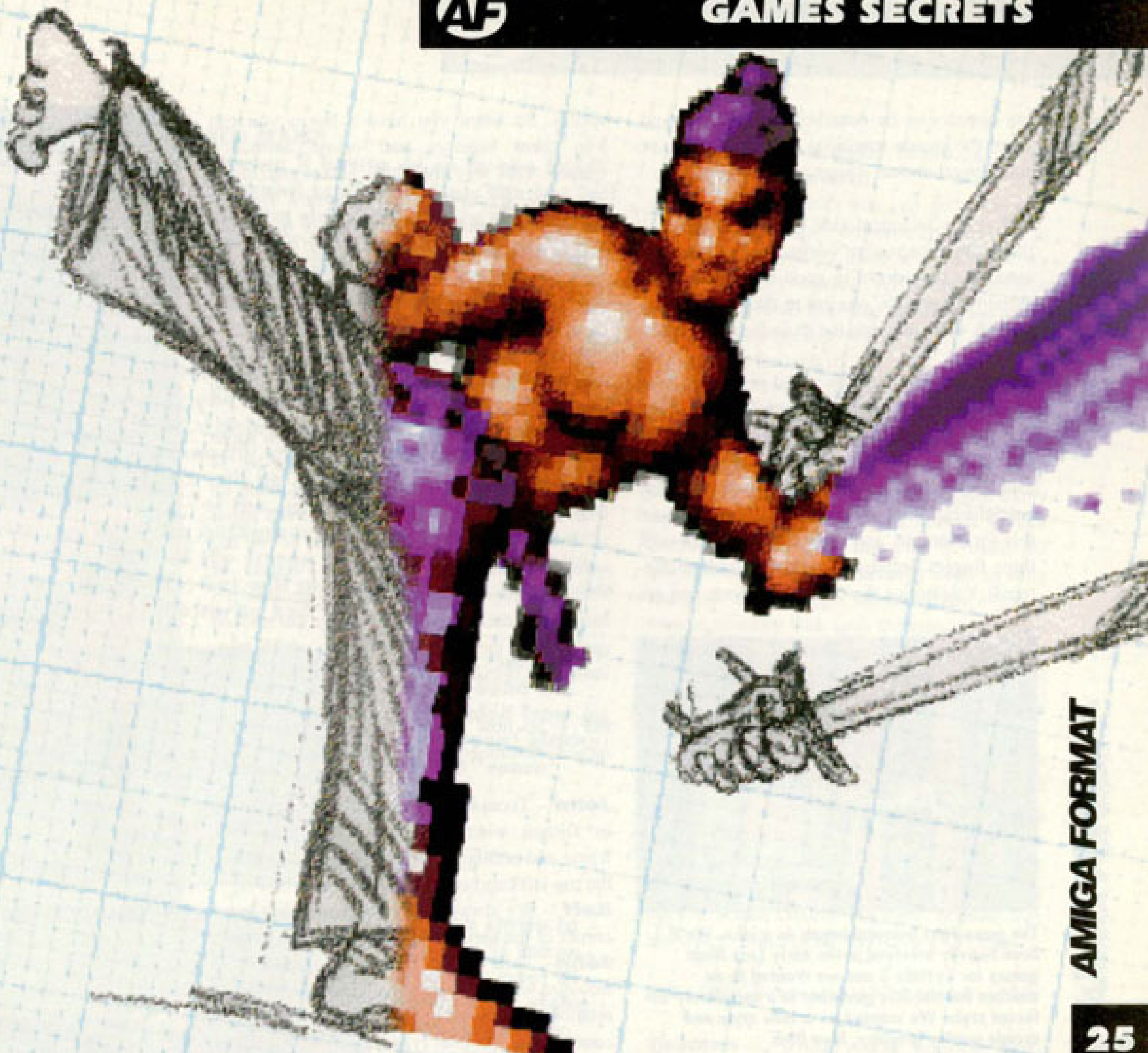




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The Secret of Game Graphics

Amiga games often generate graphics that are saturated with colour and animate fluidly. But how do these graphics get from DPaint to the games screen? **Trenton Webb** grilled Vivid Image until he got some straight answers

GAMES ARE ONLY as good as their graphics. That may be contentious, but the initial visual impression makes or breaks a game. Even if it's got great gameplay and superb sound, you're unlikely to give it second glance if the graphics have that Spectrum look. Only good graphics supported by cracking design can give a game have shot at the big league.

First Samurai from Vivid Image looks to be one of these contenders (check out the coverdisk demo now!). It has exemplary graphics is founded of solid gameplay; between them they weave a spell that makes the game memorable. No more proof is needed that Vivid Image can do the biz graphics wise. So they were folk we asked 'how do games graphics work?'

Vivid Image were eager to explain, and show off their handiwork by way of example. The team, Mev Dinc, John Twiddy, Raffaele Cecco and Teoman Irmak gathered in Harrow to spill their secrets; and to patiently explain what sprites, bitplanes and masks have to do with bashing folk in futuristic Japan.

While doodling in DPaint it's easy to switch colours around the palette, but when you start designing a game, colour choice is all important. The range you select on day one stays with you for the entire project. It's an ambiguous hypothetical question that demands a precise and instant answer.

Mev Dinc – As a general rule we allocate a certain number of colours for the main character, which remain constant throughout the game. In the case of First Samurai we used the first 8 of a sixteen colour palette. The artist can change the remaining colours to create different backgrounds, but the first eight colours have to remain the same.

Teoman Irmak – The main character was drawn in 8 colours but that was for a technical reason we didn't eventually exploit; storing less bitplanes. Every plane is made up of one or zeros, and that's a pointer to a colour look up table. The more planes you've got, the more ones and zeros you've got, therefore the more colours you've got. We thought we could draw the player in eight colours – eight just happens to be a convenient number – which meant we only needed to use three planes and could have thrown one plane away to save on memory.

AF – So if you're using only 16 colours on screen, how come the sky appears to contain hundreds of different shades.

Raffaele Cecco – The sky is drawn in one colour but this can be displayed as any of the 4096 available. Because the colour itself can be redefined on each scan line, this effectively gives you as many different colours as you have lines going down the screen. It's the same colour number though, colour zero, so you don't actually lose any colours from the palette. The Amiga's 'copper chip' can change the colour on every scan line; so we are taking advantage of it, letting the hardware do the work. Then it's just a matter of choosing the right combination of colours.



Teoman Irmak: "The Samurai character should strictly be taller, by one or two lines. It does make a difference and that adds a comic book feel."

AF – Once a palette has been defined then the artist can start work. But where exactly do you start?

Teoman – You can't really start with pretty pictures and then try to make them work, everything has to be broken down into exact quantities. It's quite mathematical at first, and you only start drawing when you've worked it out.

If you're designing a walking sprite you have to know how many pixels the screen's scrolling. Then, you have to know exactly how many frames per second the game is running at. Both help determine how many frames of animation you'll need to use. We usually break a movement down into eight or multiples (or factors) of that.

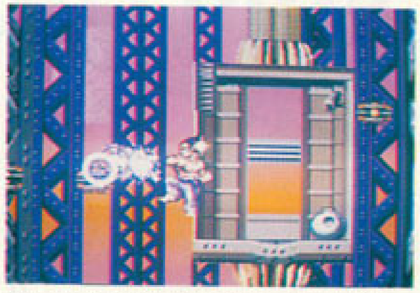
I don't try and make people walk in nine frames any more, now it's either eight or 16, or four. Having said that, the main character in First Samurai, who I inherited from another artist, still walks in 10 frames! All the other characters walk in four, but that's a cheat, because the speed of the sprites deceives the eye. It should be eight, because you walk with your left foot and then your right. In fact they do a little skip in the middle, but they do it so quickly you don't notice. This saves frames and saves memory.

Even today though there is a major problem with relatively slow frame rates. You get a skating effect where the character who's walk-

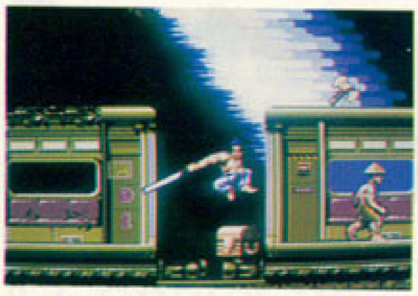
ing appears to be detached from the ground. Even the arcade machines do this, there is no solution other than a huge number of sprites.

AF – The technical side though is only half the battle once you've worked out your parameters, it's then down to good old artistic skill. What factors have you got to take into consideration when drawing the characters?

Teoman – If you draw a real person his head should be one eight of the length of his body, that is the ideal. But when you draw that on the screen you realise that he's beginning to look like a stick insect. The proportions may be right but they look wrong. Disney noticed this for example, and drew his characters with three fingers because five fingers looked cluttered! You notice the odd proportions, but are



The name First Samurai began as a joke. We'd been heavily involved in the early Last Ninja games for System 3 and we wanted to do another martial arts game but in a completely different style. We wanted an arcade style and arcade quality graphics. Mev Dink



The design is ambitious, with the best elements from different games – from shoot em ups and platforms – all in there. When we started discussing ideas we just got carried away deciding not to come up with a specific game design before we started programming. We had an overall objective, but left details until later. That way the game could still be developed as we programmed.

willing to accept it, because of the cartoon feel. The Samurai character for example should strictly be taller, by one or two lines, then he'd be more in proportion. It does make a difference, and that adds a comic book feel.

AF – Fine, but the Samurai character in the file you supplied for the coverdisk is drawn in pieces surrounded by green boxes, why?

Raff – On all my 8 bit stuff I always used to work with individual sprites, whereas all the character graphics in First Samurai are combinations of sprites. Think of them as individual frames made up of collections of sprites.

Mev – The idea of using the head, body and legs separately was so we'd be able to overlay sprites. So when you have 3 boxes you can join them together and create animation frames. This way the game makes maximum use of the sprites the artist generates. The aim is to try and create as many frames of animation from as few sprites as possible.

John Twiddy – Teoman designs the main character sprite and uses DPaint animation to test them until he's happy. Then, he cuts out the individual components and arranges them in a regular format, with each sprite placed within a rectangular box.

Raff – We have a unit size where each sprite is regarded as a box 32 pixels wide by 24 down. The main character is always made up from three sprites, with maybe a sword sprite as well. If you wanted to store that as one big sprite (square) there would be masses of wasted memory within its borders because it's blank. But these boxes don't have be stacked end to end, they can be overlaid, which minimises the blank spaces.

AF – So how is this DPaint 'sprite sheet' turned into something the game can use?

John – Teoman does an animation sequence in DPaint where he takes each individual frame and arranges them so you can see where the top left hand corner of each sprite box is.

Raff – We always work on the top left hand corner of the sprite box as the reference point.

John– Then within DPaint, it's possible to measure where the corner of sprite block is in relation to the others. These relative positions, coordinates, are then typed in manually effectively constructing a single frame reference for a group of sprites.

Raff – The sprites come to me as a DPaint file. These are compacted with a utility of John's, so if a sprite is only 10 pixels high the game doesn't bother storing the extra 14 empty lines of the box. Then I chop them into individual sprites and I'm left with a lump of memory that's got all the individual sprites and the relevant information regarding each one: how tall they, are how big it is.

AF – But how does the game use these chopped sprites?

Mev – If you imagine it as a pool of sprite data, then each sprite square on each sprite sheet has its own unique number. For instance, the first frame of the main character's walk might be made up of sprite '1' for the head, '14' for the body and '64' for the legs. So every time that frame is displayed you just call out the relevant sprites from that pool of data.

This technique allows you save memory by using certain sprites from one frame to build another. The body for example may not always change in relation to the legs. In First Samurai we used the hero's body as part of an opponent for instance. It's the same body, but with a different set of legs and heads, which saves a lot of memory. The most important thing is to use the sprites as efficiently as possible, it's the repeat factor.

Another benefit of using regular sized boxes is that even after you've cut out all the sprites and implemented them in the game,



they can still be changed. If one of the sprites looks wrong all you have to do is give that file back to the artist. Then, after the artist has made the modification, the sprite can be re-chopped and slipped back into the pool without touching the program. Because you've just got a list of numbers with the sprites allocated to them. If the sprite happens to not exist because it has been deleted, that doesn't matter, the number doesn't change. It's not like a word processor where you chop out a letter and the other letters jump back.



Raffaele Cecco: "The beauty of screen switching is that no matter how many sprites there are, it will never flicker because everything's done on the hidden screen."

Raff – In the final game you actually store the decompacted (shrunk) file that's been chopped into individual sprites, along with their masked form. So all the information is there to use instantly when the game calls that sprite number. All the sprites (and their masks) that are universal, common to the entire game, are stored in a one separate block of memory. All the opponents and items that change for each load are stored temporarily. This way you don't have to load the same set of sprites twice which helps keep the loading time to minimum and helps to maximise memory usage!

AF – So the game knows which individual frames to use but how do they animate?

Raff – For each character you create a sequence, a list of individual frames to cycle through. For the Samurai it's conditional, dependent on joystick movement to select



sequences. For the opponents it's their attack routines that stipulate which sequence they'll follow. A sequence also defines what collision areas and hit values each frame has.

AF – The Amiga has custom hardware – chips to drive sprites does this make life easier?

Raff – Hardware sprites! Well you're only allowed eight to start off with. When you start scrolling that's cut to seven and they have to be drawn in four colours. To use 16 colours you halve the number of sprites and three hardware sprites isn't a lot. There were just too many limitations to use for First Samurai.

Mev – They are very efficient though, because they're driven by the hardware. That's why we wanted to take advantage of them and use them for the parallax effect on the moons.

AF – You mentioned masking, what's that and how is it used?

Raff – A mask is effectively an inverted outline. Imagine that you just cut out the outline of a sprite and from that the Amiga, using the blitter, can calculate which parts of the background should show through and what areas are obliterated by the sprite. The mask tells the Amiga which exact pixels within the sprite square get priority and should be printed instead of the background. And if you make the mask slightly largely than the actual sprite, you can create a slight outline that help's it stand out against the background.

Teoman – You can't always guarantee that the player will always look good against all backgrounds, as some may use the same colours as him. The player has a darker outline which helps avoid most of the problems. It's just like the mouse cursor which is drawn in a light colour with a darker outline, so it can work on any background.

Raff – Using masks you can get some nice effects. For example, on some crystals later in the game, instead of using a solid mask we have one that's stippled. As the masked area alternates it looks as if that the crystal is semi-transparent, because you can see the background through it.

AF – So you've got the character sprites, then it's just a case of drawing the background?

Raff – Background's are actually built like a jigsaw puzzle. One load will contain several hundred blocks which are used to build the background. You don't actually need to store the map as one huge screen. There's just a map in memory with each location represented by numbers which reference background blocks. These blocks are 32 pixels wide by 16 pixels deep. In the First Samurai there's about three hundred blocks per level.

Mev – The backgrounds are constructed in a similar fashion to the sprites and like the sprites each block can be used many times throughout each level.

Raff – Background blocks are actually a lot simpler to handle than sprites as you don't have to bother compacting them, because they are always a full block and there's no mask.

AF – What makes a good background block?

Teoman – When you're drawing background blocks you have to have a mental picture of what you're doing. Most people would draw a pretty picture and then cut it up in blocks, but that's an inefficient way. Ultimately its the best way, it looks far better, but you end up with thousands of blocks which are used only once. The more useful way is to think in blocks. You have to have a blocky way of looking at things, start seeing things as bricks.

John – You always have to make an object work within the block of 32. You have to make any pattern repeat in multiples of 32 pixels across by 16 down. That way when they're fitted together they merge. Tricks like dark black shadows on the edges of a block can be used to help it blend into the block next to it.

AF – In First Samurai there's a neat effect where the sprite walks behind some of the background, how's that done?

Raff – To get the 3D effect where the sprites go behind some areas of the background, you have to print the screen in three stages. First you print the background, then you print the sprites on top of that and then you print foreground blocks on top of that. In First Samurai we added another stage because someone had the bright idea of having masked background blocks overlaid on top of everything else. Here you take a background block and treat it as a sprite. Take for example, the tree seen at the beginning of the demo. You can't just lift the whole tree and slap it on. It needs to masked because it's an irregular shape. I create the mask by assuming that wherever there is sky

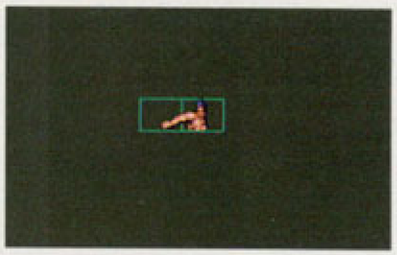
WHO IS THAT MASKED MAN?

When a screen is drawing it has to do so in one fluid motion, drawing horizontal scan lines from the top left hand corner to the bottom right. Obviously the game can't draw the background then go back and draw the sprites on top of that so 'holes' have to be cut in the background where the sprites will appear. This is where masks come in.

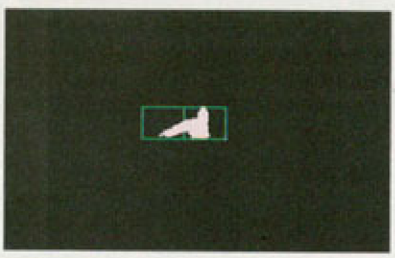
Like a pastry cutter the mask is the exact shape of the sprite. With the coordinates calculated from the man's movement and the using the reference points of each 'sprite box' within the next animation frame the program knows exactly where the top left hand corner of each sprite box will be placed. The mask - an inverted outline - of the sprite is then taken and stamped onto the background. The game will now not print any parts of the screen obliterated by the solid part of the sprite, but will print background where the empty part of the sprite box falls.



(1) The 'target' background is assembled from its constituent blocks on the 'spare' screen.



(2) The sprite in it's box is taken from the pool of sprite data along with its readily prepared mask.



(3) A mask shows where the 'sprite' actually is within the block. A mask tells the seperates the character picture from it's background colour.



(4) When stamped onto the background the mask cuts an exact hole where the sprite and not the background block is to be printed.



(5) When the screen is re-drawn the 'sprite' fills the hole. The blitter is used to calculate which areas of the sprite box should be printed and what shouldn't. NB. As this is all calculated and cannot be seen, these pictures merely describe the process.

colour in the block then the background will show through. Then you can overlay that reduced shape on the top of the masked background, but that starts to slow the game down if it's used to much.

AF – Often the background itself seems to animate, is this done with sprites?

John – Certain areas of the background actually cycle through a series of animations and as the screen's being updated anyway it takes no more processor time. The original spec was to run every frames 12 frames a second. As it turned out, thanks to Raff's 'super efficient code' we could have run at 25 frames a second. As the sprite animation was geared around 12 frames a second. But by using background animationswe can add that extra illusion of movement and action.

AF – So once you've got the sprites and backgrounds, is the information, coordinates etc. typed in to the game where they are united with the core game program?

Mev – We wanted to write a graphics package specifically for the game, which would allow us to implement our ideas and experiment with them quickly. So, John wrote a game editor which multi-tasks with DPaint. This allows Teoman to build up the map backgrounds and test them. If they need adjusting he just flicks back to DPaint and puts it right. Therefore the editor was the first thing we started to program.

Raff – I insisted upon it. It's hard to develop a game without some kind of map editor.

Mev – John actually still working on the editor now and it's always being enhanced, as the game design develops.

John – I was making more modifications to it only last night!

Raff – New features are always being added. One late introduction was the ability to turn background blocks upside down, effectively doubling the number of blocks. Although we hadn't implemented it initially, it was easy to do but we just hadn't thought of it.

Mev – It now looks as if the editor will be finished in parallel with the game. It's now very powerful as it allows you to play around with the map.

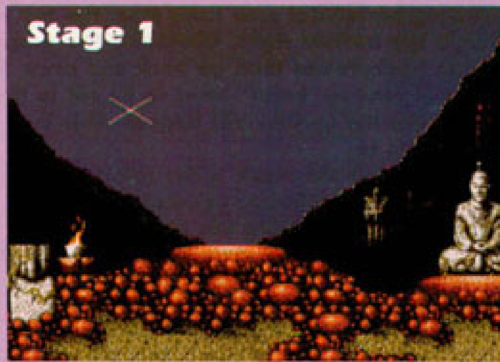
Raff – And I don't have to type in big tables, it's pick and place!

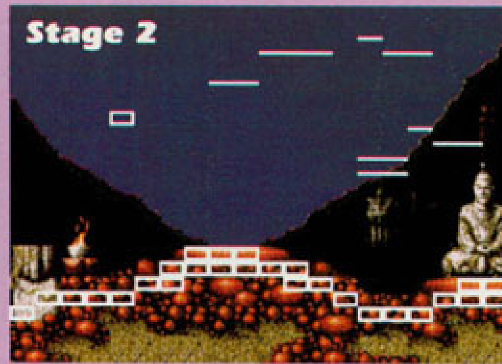
AF – So you can toy with background blocks in the editor, but how is the game assembled?

John – What you can stand on is determined by a separate map which we call the edge of road. This has much smaller squares than the background map, and that's a facility of the editor. It allows you to define what you can stand on, what's solid, what you can jump through and what you can climb up.

Raff – The graphics aren't 'assembled' as a screen until they are called in the game, but there is a facility in the editor however which allows you to see the backgrounds, the background 3D and the masked 3D simultaneously. And over this we create the edge of road map

SO WHAT DOES THE EDITOR DO?











Stage 1 – This is how the backgrounds appear when they've been built up in the editor. Notice that the sky is one colour, marked with an X. To the editor this signifies that the entire area of that colour is neutral.

Stage 2 – Here the areas where the Samurai can walk have been added. The rectangular areas are ordinary road which he can just walk on. The flat lines show an area where the hero can jump up through and then stand on. The ones in the sky represent the boughs of the tree. This is called the Edge of Road map.

Stage 3 – This is the editor showing what attributes have been assigned to each individual object or area. 0209 for instance signifies the pot from which the Samurai springs at the beginning of the game. The numbers above it show how well charged it is and if the Samurai will return there when slain.

Stage 4 – Here the masked 3D blocks have been added to the equation, showing themselves visually. The remaining visible numbers are effects triggers, for example 020A starts the bat attack.

Stage 5 – The editor allows the different parts of the background to be shown separately. Here the block 3D is shown as a highlight while the mask 3D is shown as solid.

Stage 6 – Naturally one of the final checks of any map section is the visual check. Here edge of road map, block 3D, masked 3D and effects blocks are shown all together.

Stage 7 – In Zoom mode the artist/designer can check that they are making maximum use of the available area. It also helps to get an idea of how the various sections of the map connect.

John Twiddy – "The editor has to use the Amiga's operating system, so that it can access hard drives, second drives and of course DPaint. Using the editor is simple you select blocks, that have already been defined, from a menu and past them down on the map".

Each block of background, 3D background, masked 3D background or background animation frame only has to be defined once and then it can be tried, tested and included with the click of a mouse button. Previously, all this would have to have been typed in, which is hard work and far more hit and miss than a graphic interface.

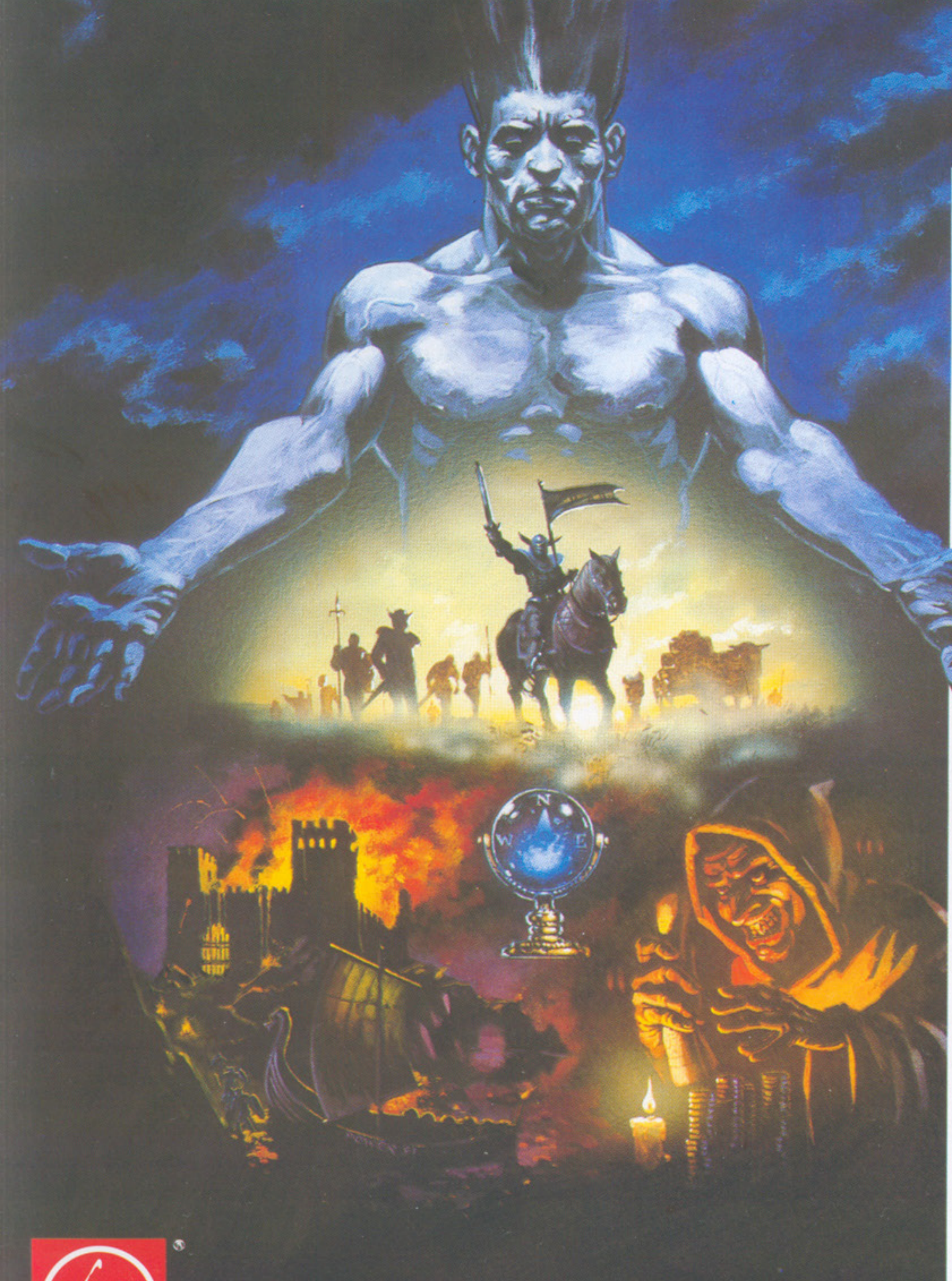
Will it be used to develop other games? "We've spent so much time developing this editor, that if we don't use it again we ought to be shot"





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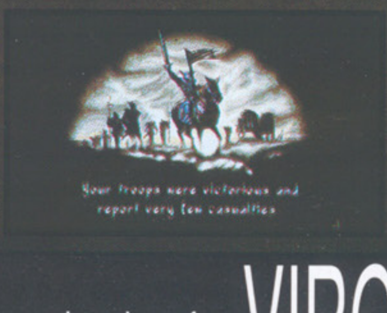
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and store information as to what starts an attack or initiates an effect. The fire sound effects, for example, you only hear it when you reach a certain effects block. It's simply a block that activates the effect when it either appears on the game window or the player sprite touches it.

The way I use an effects block may varies. The bat effects block for example triggers as soon as it appears on the game's screen, it's a global command. Whereas others may refer to a specific opponents which appear from where you've laid down the specific effects block.

John – It's important to remember that the screen display is just an isolated window on the game and edge of road maps. It's like a word processor where you only see part of the document. But because the edge of road map is held complete for each level, its possible to keep track of opponents even when they are off the edge of the screen.

AF – And with the editor the artist assembles the backgrounds, then the programmer puts the edge of road and effects blocks on?

Mev – Raff actual did the background maps himself, because he felt that it was easier to design the maps and implement the game elements. If it the artist had created the map, then the designer would have to work around what the artist had done.

John – The problems is that the artist is going to make gaps to wide so you can't jump across them or roofs to low so you walk under them without even realising it. You don't want those kind of problems.

AF – So is all this done on an Amiga?



Mev Dinc: "The most important thing is to use sprites efficiently as possible, it's the repeat factor. For instance, in First Samurai we used the hero's body as part of an opponent."

Raff – No,I develop on a PC, PDS editor slaved to my Amiga, which just sits there and breaks down a lot.

John – The maps, background and edge of road are built on the Amiga and then the data is uploaded on to a PC, where it's assembled into a game; this is where the code and routines that drive the game are added. Then, when we're testing we just squirt it down a wire into the Amiga. We use this system because if the game crashes, you never lose your code which is still in place on the PC. If you were testing the game on the machine it was written you run the risk of losing the code due to data corruption every time it crashes.

AF – Once you've got all the graphics, the backgrounds, the maps and effects assembled how does the game process them all and produce a screen of graphics?

Raff – What you've got is an invisible 'screen' where the next overall games display is calculated and made ready to print. When it's been created, the hardware just switches to that 'screen' and displays it. While it's displaying that one, the next is being stuck together on the invisible screen. It's called page flipping or screen switching. The beauty of it is, that no matter how many sprites there are, it will never flicker because everything's always done on the hidden screen. The worst that can happen is that the game will slow down, but it will never flicker.

AF – In what order does the program assemble all this information?

Raff – Well a simplified version version of the main game loop goes like this, although each of these stages contain several other sub-stages, but the full list would take pages!

```
MOVE THE MAN - Call the routine
that handles the man's move-
ments. It checks the joystick
for any movement and then move
man routine, works out where
you've moved: left or right, up
or down.

UPDATE COORDINATES - Depending
on the man's movements, deter-
mine where exactly in the map
you're pointing the screen. As
the Samurai is the constant what
can be seen is determined by his
position.
```


First Samurai Instructions

First Samurai is a tough and highly slick arcade adventure with strong beat em up overtones. With excellent graphics, merciless pace and outrageous sound make sure you've a joystick in port two, an serious attitude problem and the volume turned full up.

After loading you are faced with a title screen which has a red pulsing border. After approximately 30 seconds of decompacting this screen changes and pressing fire starts the game. It's dying time!

The plot concerns a murdered Samurai master and his young pupil's search for the culprits. The lad starts without weapons and must use his karate skills to kill enemies. After a few clean kills he earns himself a sword to help in his quest. What's more the boy's master is on hand in spirit form to help out in particularly tough situations.

When you first appear, stand still and practice the fighting moves – it's the only place where you won't be attacked, so make the most of these few moments of peace. When you're ready make your way to the right and be ready to battle.

If the swooping bats hit the First Samurai then his life energy is depleted (the arm found at the bottom left of the status panel). Hits also knock down the kids Bushido rating, but this can be corrected by bashing beasties. Each kill adds to his Bushido power (shown by the sword in the bottom right of the status panel). When the sword is half complete, a blade flies into his paws and it's slice and dice. His fighting moves vary when using the sword, so again practice if you get a few spare seconds. Be warned if the sword power goes below half, due to hits, then the sword will disappear.

Bushido power has another advantage, it allows you to stipulate the restart



Cutting downwards with the sword will destroy the floor and open up new areas to explore. What lives downstairs though, may not be too pleased to see you.



Logs aren't the kind of luggage you'd think was important, but they are. Keep and collect as many as possible. They don't show up on the status bar but they are still there.

PROCESSING EFFECTS BLOCKS - That will determine which sprites get initialised. The game checks to see if anything is triggered by the characters position.

BUILD UP THE BACKGROUND - this is done on an invisible screen that you can't see yet. All the relevant background blocks are called from the block data pool.

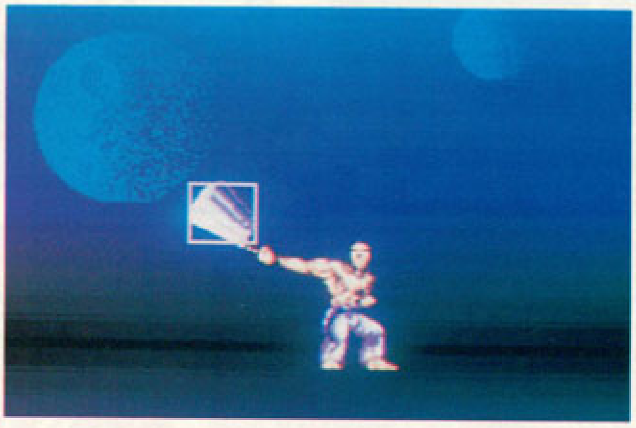
MOVE ALL THE SPRITES - this may include some of the ones triggered off by the effects blocks and you also take the ones that were on screen in the last frame, moved on to to their next frame of animation.

PRINT THE SPRITES - Mask the inverted outlines of both man and opponent sprites, then print them on to the background..

PRINT THE BLOCK 3D - Print the 3D background blocks over the top of everything. No mask is needed as the block is a rectangle and it can be slotted staright into the memory map.

PRINT THE MASKED 3D - Mask over the background and sprites and then print the masked 3D blocks.

Collision detection uses boxes. For a sprite you just specify a box size for that sprite. Anything going into that area is considered to be a hit. For each character, you'll have two boxes, one for where the body is vulnerable and one for where the weapon strikes. To check the game just has to cross reference "Has that opponents sword square hit my vulnerable square and vice versa?"



So say for example that the sword is coming down on an opponent, before it actually draws the opponent it checks the boxes and if it's actually hit the opponent then it draws it as all white.

Obviously depending on the frame of the sequence the sprites in that box size will change and that has to be manually typed in for each sprite. And to aid playability, the hero gets a slight collision advantage, with a smaller vulnerable area and more generous sword zone.

CHECK FOR COLLISIONS - Check to see if any of the opponents hit the man and vice versa.

STATUS CHECK - has the player's energy gone below zero etc? If this is the case a new sequence will be called next frame.

LOOP - Re-run to the top of the list and start all over again

For loop see loop. A new screen is being drawn every 25th of a second and the character sprites are moved and redrawn every 12th. Commanding the animated sequences via the joystick, the monitor's window on the world scrolls around the game map following the character. Every joystick command simply calls stored sprites and backgrounds which assemble on screen. Once the character sprite encroaches on an effects block the game calls the respective enemy sprite into action.

Behind all the graphics lay the game routines, the alien 'intelligence' and the intuitive judgement involved in game design. It takes good graphic work though to tell their story, to create that magic. Using sleight of screen and processing speeds that outstrip the human eye, the game appears to flow fluidly as you fight the latest monsters in a terrifyingly picturesque world. It's hard to believe that the entire game is simply displayed as series of static screens, that nothing ever actually moves. It is easy to forget though when the you the bats.

point for the next life. If the Samurai finds a pot – like the one he started next to – then he can crouch behind it and invest Bushido power in it. This means if he dies (when he dies!) the game begins from that point and not the far left. This saps about half of your available Bushido power, so kill something quick afterwards! You don't have to do this, but it is a useful trade off of current power for a good start next time round.

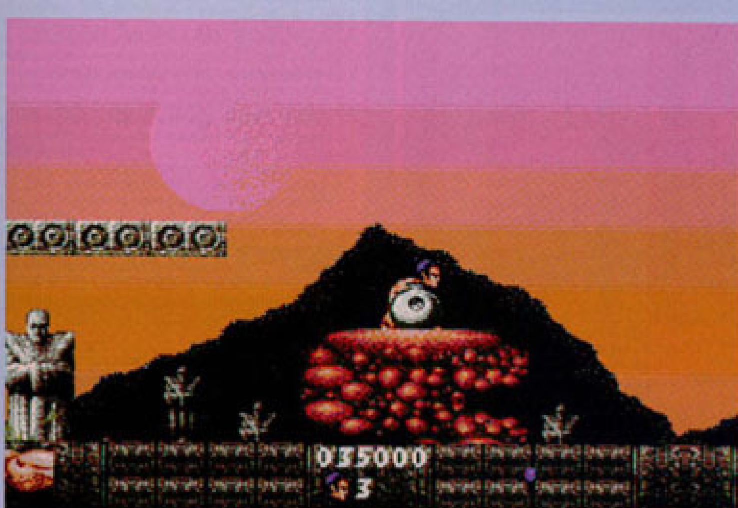
There is no definite aim the demo, except points based slaughter, but there is a huge map to explore. On your travels you will comes across a few features that will further either the score or the quest. First and foremost are the baskets of food. These need to be sliced a few times before they scatter grub all around, which puts life back into the rapidly shrinking arm gauge. They also have an excellent sound sample and are worth searching out just for the 'wow' factor.

To pick up any weapons or bonuses that litter the landscape the Samurai just needs to duck over them. If it's a weapon – knife or axe – then pressing fire while the joystick is centred will cause a missile to fly out in the direction he's facing. These may not be accessible though if the Bushido rating is low. The current extra weapon is displayed in the centre of the status panel between the lives counter and the strength rating.

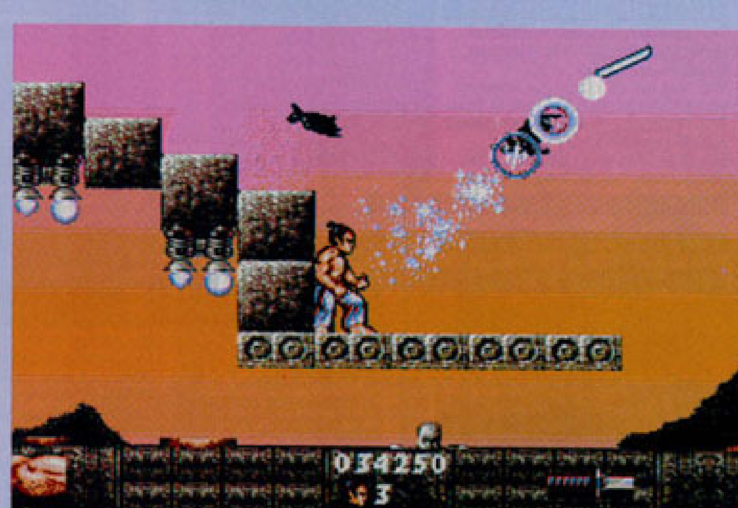
On top of the weapons are the magical tools by which the Samurai may invoke some of his master's power. The most powerful of these are the bells which summon the old guy. Used at the right moment (look for the Master's ghostly image) they can make the impassable passable. When you wish to use one let the joystick centre and hold down the fire button. The current magical item carried is displayed to the right of the lives counter.

If all the monsters are to be found, Samurai must also search out the breakable flooring. Struck with either sword or foot these areas give way revealing new caverns and dangers. Remember though if the floor is knocked from under a monster then it also falls, so time those cuts.

First Samurai is a game of exploration and experimentation. If you get stuck, try cutting into the scenery or using a special item next to the problem. If you use the logs and get are still stuck then you've finished the demo – when you get there that description will make sense!.



Crouching behind any pot will swap some energy from your sword/Bushido gauge to the pot. If you die you'll start again from here.



If you get hit the Bushido meter will decrease. When this reaches critical the sword will disappear in a hail of magic. Most disconcerting!

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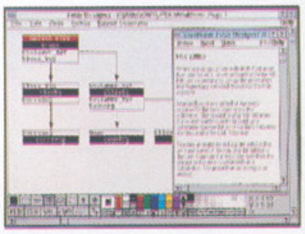
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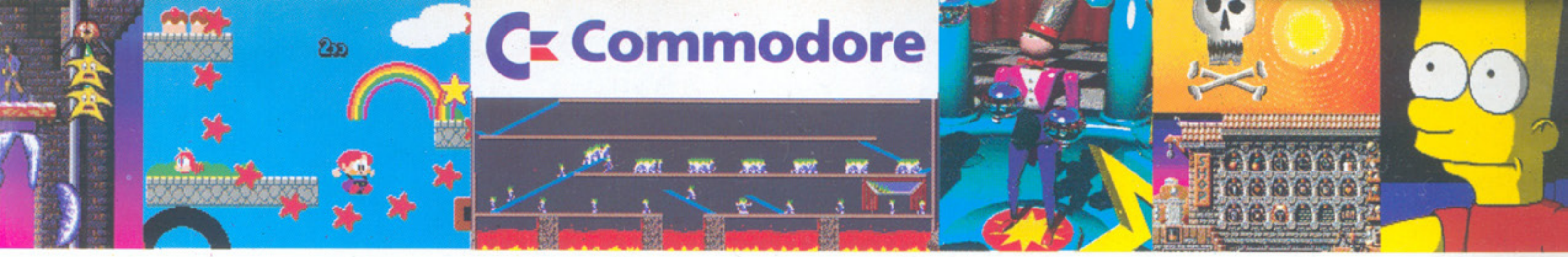
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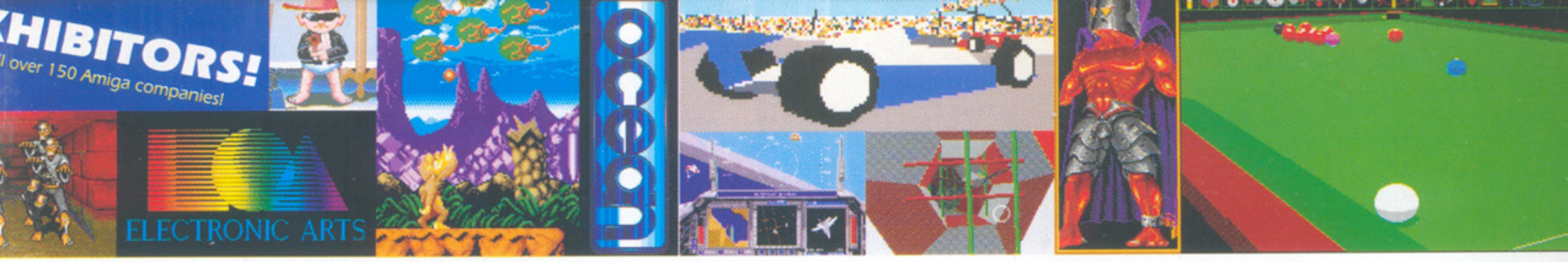
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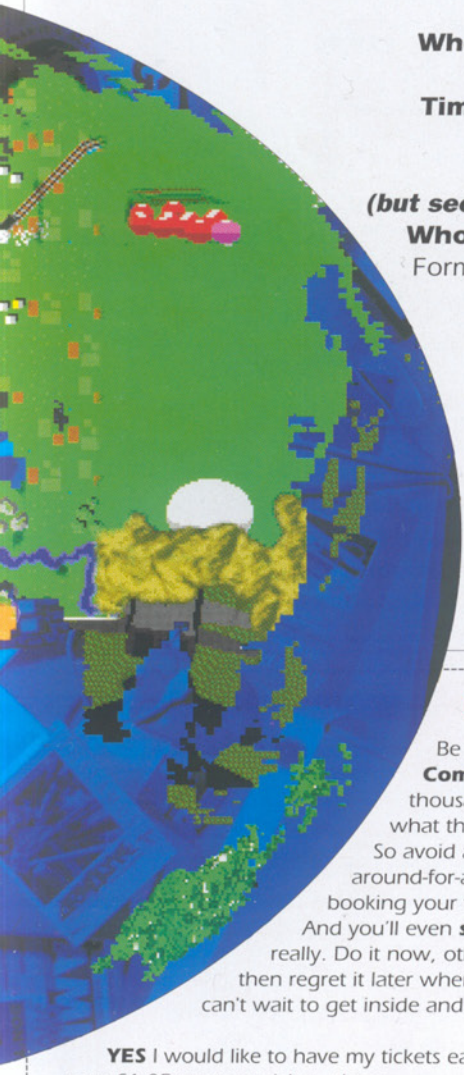




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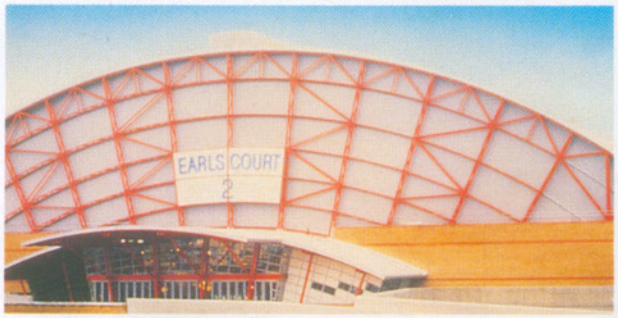
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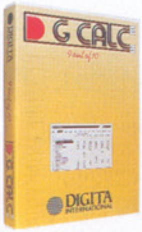
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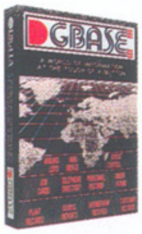
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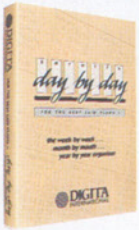
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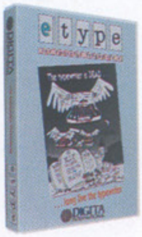
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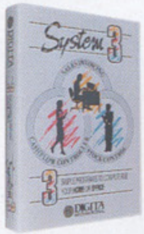
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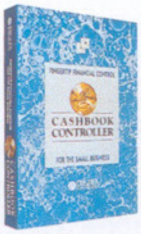


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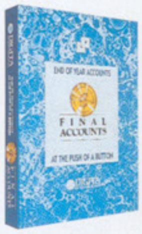


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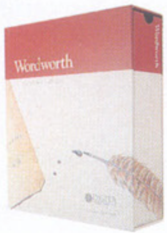


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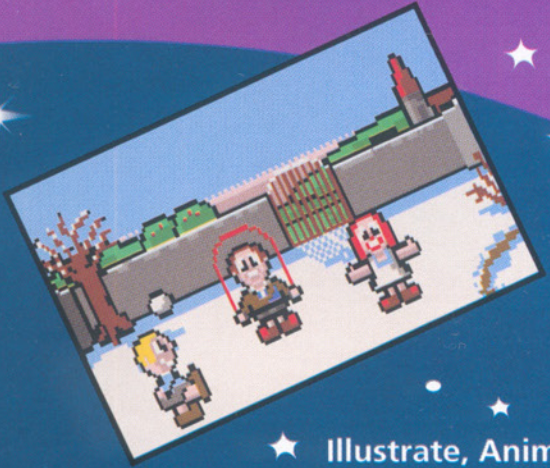
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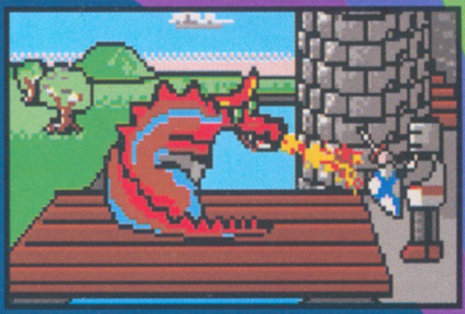
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Is Utopia a dream? Can Gremlin build a better future? The foundations are laid on P.52

Flight of the Intruder

'Nam vets get airborne. Is it one for top guns or animal doctors? P.62

Silent Service II

Does MicroProse's second-time around sub-sim sink or swim? Sea P.68

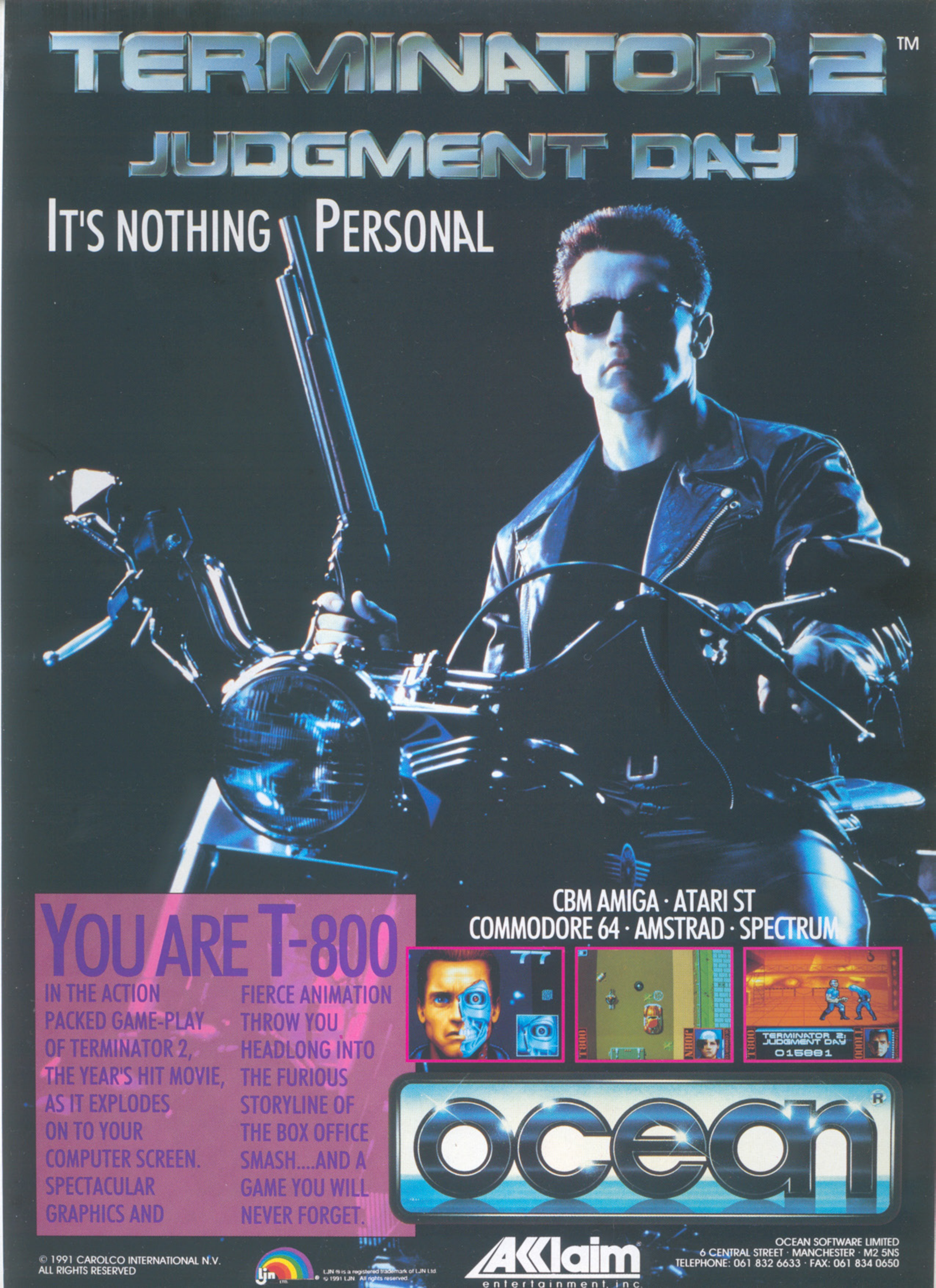
Midwinter II – Flames of Freedom

The BIG sequel! Island hop to P.82

Pitfighter

Can the coin be converted? Domark kick butt on P.89

Screenplay is the showcase for the all the latest Amiga leisure software. It's brief is to review games just before they hit the shops, to provide the most authoritative and accurate purchasing guide found in any Amiga magazine. You'll find no PC or ST games masquerading as Amiga software here, just so that Screenplay can claim the 'exclusive'. The reviews are written by the Format staffers and seasoned professionals, drawn from Future Publishing's crop of market-leading computer titles. This month's reviewers are: Trenton Webb, James Leach, Neil West, Ed Ricketts, Adrian Price and Ian Wrigley.



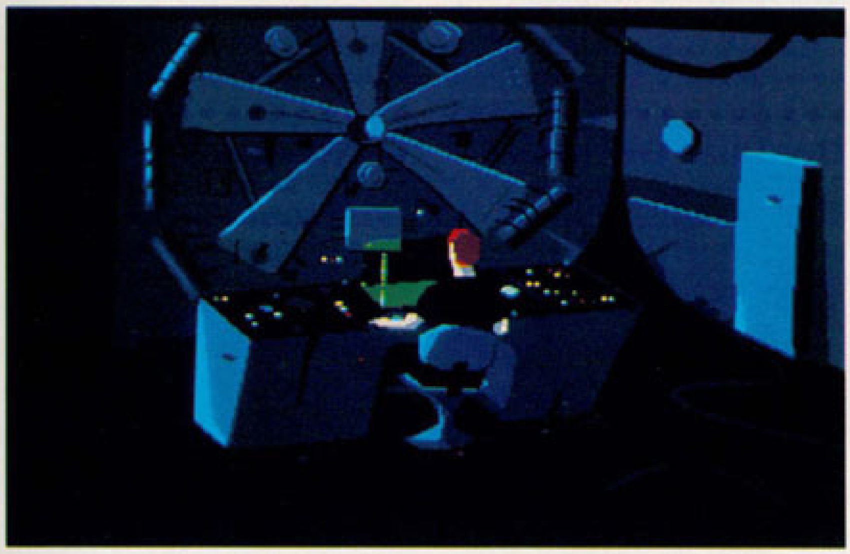
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Another World

Publisher **Delphine/US Gold** Release **Late 1991**

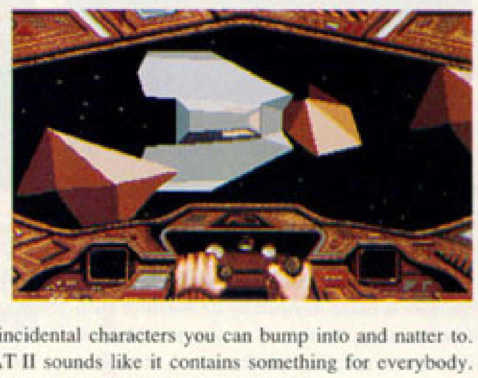


The first fruits of Delphine's polygon animation system were harvested in Cruise for a Corpse, but this graphic adventure system was designed with Another World in mind. Eric Chahi who co-designed Future Wars –Delphine's first graphic adventure – has spent the two years since it's launch working on this new game's engine. The result is a system that ignores the usual bitmap techniques and uses polygons to facilitate cinematic zooms and panning shots around the screen.

The game tells the tale of a radical young scientist whose lab explodes, catapulting him to Another World. The place is littered with the usual range of fierce and friendly creatures who Lester Chaykin (the scientist) can ally with to help him explore this brave new world. The system has already proved itself in Cruise for a Corpse, but Another World will have to match the detective tale for plot twists and turns too. Coming from the man who Future Wars together though, there should be few worries.

BAT II

Publisher **UBI Soft**
Release **Late 1991**



BAT II the future? Someone is trying to kill the hero of BAT (Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters) and you've got to find out who? Following in the graphic adventure mode of I, BAT promises much much more. With enhanced graphics, a vastly larger playing area and more arcade sections it should leave its forerunner for dead. Most impressive are the 3D 'modelized' planets and the wealth of incidental characters you can bump into and natter to. With four flight sims and a car racing BAT II sounds like it contains something for everybody. Can such a homogelation make the grade? If it can the potential is phenomenal.

Short stuff



Powermonger 1914 style. It's all well and good having tanks but where are the sheep? No, I mean what are we going to eat?

The latest data disk to hit the circuit is the long-awaited Powermonger: The World War I edition. It takes the medieval warlords on to the Some for serious firepower frolics. Tanks and biplanes are the new toys for the new range of generals.

"The World War I Edition is not simply a graphical change to the original" explains Peter Molyneux. We have re-worked the whole of the program with many enhanced features, with new computer opponents and the game being played on a map of Europe". It will be released in December and if it's as playable as Powermonger, then it definitely won't be over by Christmas!

Elvira, the arcade heroine steps out (right). Elvira the adventure queen does her thang (below).





Elvira is hardly the vicious macho type normally associated with scrolling arcade game. But, the hobble-skirted TV hostess is due to appear in her own blast em up. To prove that the concept is plausible (if a bit silly) a self-running demo has been distributed and the results are surprising. Elvira the arcade should be with us before Christmas.

Continued overleaf

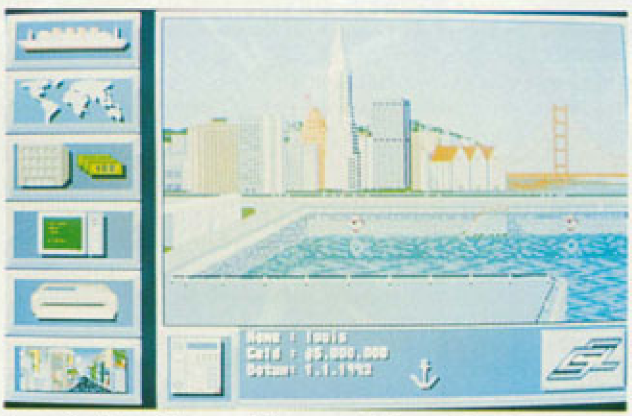
Elvira II – The Jaws of Cerberus completes the Elvira package. It's the sequel to the successful, if not critically acclaimed, Elvira – Mistress of the Dark. In a more staid mode than the arcade version the 'lovely' lady will be on hand to help solve those adventure-type problems with her spell book. Elvira and her dog should be available just after Christmas.



The Bonanza Bros boot up, on the pitch now, on the Amiga soon.

The Bonanza Bros have a chequered history, namely before they became all-star heroes in the eponymous two-player arcade quest they were criminals. US Gold's game starring them, tells the tale of their attempts to stay on the straight and narrow, working as testers for security systems. It may sound daft, but that's because it is.

A management game that makes waves! Well you try thinking of a pun for Transatlantic, the new game about shipping from Rainbow Arts. It promises all the pressures of real business, where you have to keep the balance sheet, well, balanced, as well as offering some more colourful practices such as sabotage?



Transatlantic, a ship game with cargo, trading, sailing and sabotage.

January has been set as the firm release date for Eye of the Beholder II. Number Two will feature a whole host of new locations including some wilderness wandering in forests, a heavier bias towards puzzles and more character interaction. These features will be enveloped in a higher levels adventure, so mages can get their paws on even more powerful spells as they search for the Legend of Darkmoon.

Previews update

Chinto's Revenge – Millennium: October 1991
Thunderjaws – Domark: Release imminent.
Mad TV – Rainbow Arts: Still in game testing.
Dragon Fighter – Idea: October 1991.
Alcatraz – Infogrames: Undergoing re-design.
Final Blow – Storm: Mid-October 1991.
Mercenary III – Novagen: Will be reviewed next month.
Suspicious Cargo – Gremlin: Release imminent.
Battle Isles – UBI Soft: Release imminent.

Populous 2

Publisher **Electronic Arts**
Release **December 1991**



The gaming world has been on tenterhooks ever since Populous II was announced. Now the first official screen shots of the final game are available, even if there's few details of how it will be played. What is certain though is that players will have even greater god powers than ever before to make the little folks life heaven or hell.

Devious Designs

Publisher **Image Works**
Release **October 1991**



Set in a world where an infernal machine has cubed and squared most of the world's buildings, only JJ Maverick (you) can put things right. This is an action puzzle game that uses the mad scientist metaphor to set up a building against the clock dilemma. Original games that stress their quirkiness have to work hard to get themselves noticed, but if they're good they can be the most rewarding.

Leander

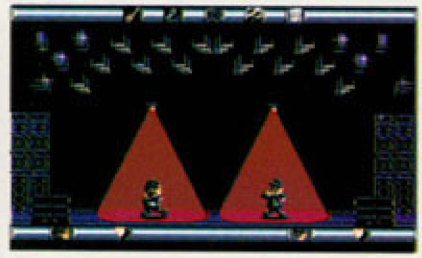
Publisher **Psygnosis**
Release **November 1991**



One of the first rules of both of computing and chivalry is 'save regularly' – like guiding Leander to the rescue of a fair Princess. Success is made difficult by 23 levels of monsters standing between Leander and his lady. A smooth scrolling platform test, it stresses accurate jumping and swift sword slashing.

The Blues Brothers

Publisher **Titus**
Release **Imminent**



Based on their adventures on Saturday Night Live and not the movie, Jake and Elwood are all set to burst onto the Amiga. The Blues Brothers game is a platform epic that hopes to capture that peculiar blend of anarchy personified by the two Chicago-based shade-wearers. They are on the hunt for the kit and permits to hold another open air charity gig. Can Belushi be captured as a pixel person?

Centrebase

Publisher **Rainbow Arts**
Release **November 1991**



Welcome to the city of future. In fact you're so welcome to it that the citizens have elected you mayor! A volatile mix of cyberpunks, computers and computers means that balancing the community's needs will be a real challenge. Centrebase takes the city management concept into the 21st Century by adding spies, subversives and sabotage to the mix. Sporting a mix of 3D graphics and 'painted' pictures it should also look the biz Sci-Fi wise.

Ork

Publisher **Psygnosis**
Release **November 1991**



The Ork – previously known as Infiltrator – has to negotiate vertical nasty-filled mazes collecting items and using terminals to find a way of escaping. Reminiscent of Killing Game Show in look, the gameplay should stress totally different play elements, with puzzles not speed top of the list.

Heimdall

Publisher **Core Design** Release **December 1991**

Core Design shook the sim world with Thunderhawk, can Heimdall now do the same to role-playing games?



Here Heimdall is put to the axe-throwing test. He has 10 axes and eight plats to cut. Unfortunately the lad's smashed so his aim is impaired. This is one of the evaluation tests that dictate how many followers Heimdall will have. A poor score isn't terminal, it just means he gets a smaller choice of possible comrades for his quest.

Here we have a tale that tells of ancient Norse legends with a graphic gloss that would shame the gods. Yet designers 8th Day are aiming for far more than a spectacular slideshow. If *Heimdall* matches the original design specifications then it could radically merge the world of arcade action and true RPG adventure.

The instant you see *Heimdall* in action you'll be stunned. It brings *Space Ace* and *Dragon's Lair*-quality graphics down to size, slaps them down in an isometric perspective and introduces true playability. Using this as a base for the action set up, the adventure side is introduced with individual character skills that at last allow the full involvement of specialists (eg thieves) as well as wizards and warriors.

Making a prophet

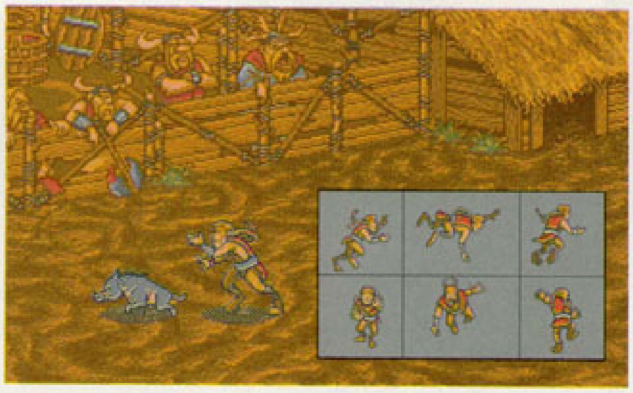
The plot follows a legendary young boy into maturity and onto his prophesied fate: an adventure to save the world. He must collect about him a band of followers, then search out three divine weapons. These will swing the balance at the ultimate battle between good and evil, Ragnarok.

Every RPG needs stats and dice. The first determines your very characteristics, while the dice supply a continual stream of random numbers. *Heimdall's* RPG mechanics are hidden within the game, only recognisable as luck or the hand of fate. Attacks or attempts at anything are calculated against your characters attributes, not the player's speed or joystick skill. Actions are invoked graphically and their results displayed graphically, so maintaining the constant illusion of 'being there'.

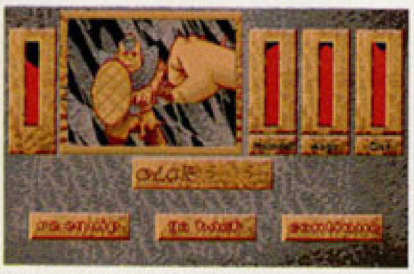
Heimdall, the guy through whom you act out the tale, will be randomly generated in terms of his performance. This won't take the normal (and quite mercenary) route of re-rolling imaginary dice until all his abilities are at or near maximum. Heimdall the boy, when he wishes to prove himself a man must do so in traditional Viking fashion. Your performance dictates what level of Viking he is: how tough, how strong, how dextrous etc. He has to throw axes while smashed out of his face, catch a greased pig and prove his worth at ship fighting. All are humorous in the extreme, and the performance dictates how many of the possible 30 recruits for the five-man squad will actually turn up for the interview.

All at sea

Once out on the open sea much of the action will transfer to isometric 3D sprites. Here the action mode takes precedence, with joystick control all around the environment. Combat and interaction though won't take place in this format, because this would radically shift the games perspective towards the beat-em-up end of the scale.



Wrestling a greased pig to the floor is the second test of Viking manhood. The screen (inset) shows the difficulties of using an isometric perspective. Eight sprites are needed for each frame!



Here Heimdall's boys are in a scrap. All those eligible to attack will take it in turn to have a bash. The 'dice rolling' is done in the background with just the resulting actions being shown. Neat atmospheric RPG stuff.



This is how the majority of the movement will be controlled. Once Heimdall comes close to an object or foe the combat screen is shown.

Whenever battle is joined, treasure is inspected or a spell is cast and the perspective shifts to individual character screens. These like any good games (*Dungeon Master*) will simply demand to know your action for the following round. If fighting, this will include everything from weapon selection to type of stroke. Then, behind the scenes the game calculates the result by cross-referencing your abilities with the relative difficulty of the action attempted. As all will either be success or failures – there are no near-misses – then one of two animated sequences will be displayed. For a warrior this could be a flailing sword-stroke and a solid hit.

The ingenuity of this introduction is that the likes of thieves can at last play their full part. Just as warriors can be seen bashing monsters, so can rogues be seen dismantling traps. An if they can dismantle them, then they have to detect them, further reinforcing the role play side of the adventure. And broadening the base of real character interaction allows more varied traps and puzzles to be set.

Spritely stuff

The isometric side of the game will be no slouch either, expertly animated in the game's overall graphic style. There will be dungeons and islands by the ship load to explore in both forms, puzzles that require magic, or cunning, or guesswork to solve as the trail for the three lost weapons hots up.

Heimdall in its demo form has incredible promise. The graphics are a reality, they demand attention, animating smoothly and amusingly. The test will be whether the disparate elements can be glued seamlessly together, bringing together the isometric arcade-style with the character-by-character RPG. If it's easy to slip between characters and display styles, then it will be a BIG leaguer. Core proved they could radically revise long accepted generic conceptions with *Thunderhawk; Heimdall* could put a similar cat among the RPG pigeons.

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The faithful (if somewhat thick) Ratpouch neatly illustrates his independence by bumbling around the town square. If you stand still and watch the crowd all manner of interesting info can be gleaned. Lure of the Temptress actually has gossips who run about the game world spreading new information and malicious lies.



How to ruin a Skorl guard's day, lock him up in his own prison. Now freed our hero can begin the adventure.



The picture above is what's seen by looking through this little grated window. While in the cell you can see the reverse angle.

Lure of the Temptress

Publisher **Revolution Software/Image works** Release **1992**

Cruise for a Corpse was murderously good, The Secret of Monkey Island sent everybody ape, but now 'point and click' graphic adventures are set to undergo a revolution.

Graphic adventures are nothing new, but until now all the real classic games have come from the States or France. Revolution are set to stem this tide with their new 'Virtual Theatre' system. Designed and built in Britain the game's been in development for a year-and-a-half, will be on the streets next spring and it should shake the graphic adventure world. Trolls, magic and monsters may be familiar but the living world in which they inhabit is most definitely a first.



Listen to this man, apart from water he may begin to tell you what's going down in the outside world, then again he may just be thirsty!

A Unix approach

"Unix – the multi-user operating system – was the model for the system," claims Tony Wariner, co-designer of Virtual Theatre. An OS may sound odd as inspirational material goes, but it appears to be viciously astute. The whole *Temptress* world runs at once and even when they're not on-screen, characters are moving between locations, talking and going about their business.

The freedom of movement is achieved by a system Revolution call Auto-routing. This means if one non-player character receives the instruction "move to another location" from the player – and they agree – they will work out their own path and don't need guiding. If it's accessible, they'll get there, eventually.

Auto-routing not only has to guide folk to their destination but it has to avoid hazards as well. The solution was simple in concept but a huge headache to code, as each character had to be given enough intelligence to wait or move to allow others past. The blockage still slows them up, but strangely art begins to imitate life here as the delays add that real feeling of unpredictability to the world.



Because of the interactive nature of characters, helping one person may well earn you favours with another, once news of your good deeds start to get around town. If you're particularly impressive they may even agree to follow and help you.

In addition to the auto-routing intelligence each person you meet during the game has their own tale to tell. What's more they will tell each other their stories if they cross paths. As a player this gives you the chance to gain information in the game simply by standing still and reading the other folks' speech bubbles. There's even a facility to spread rumours: if the player says something that the non-player character didn't know, they may pass the word on next time they chat to another NPC.

PC Plot

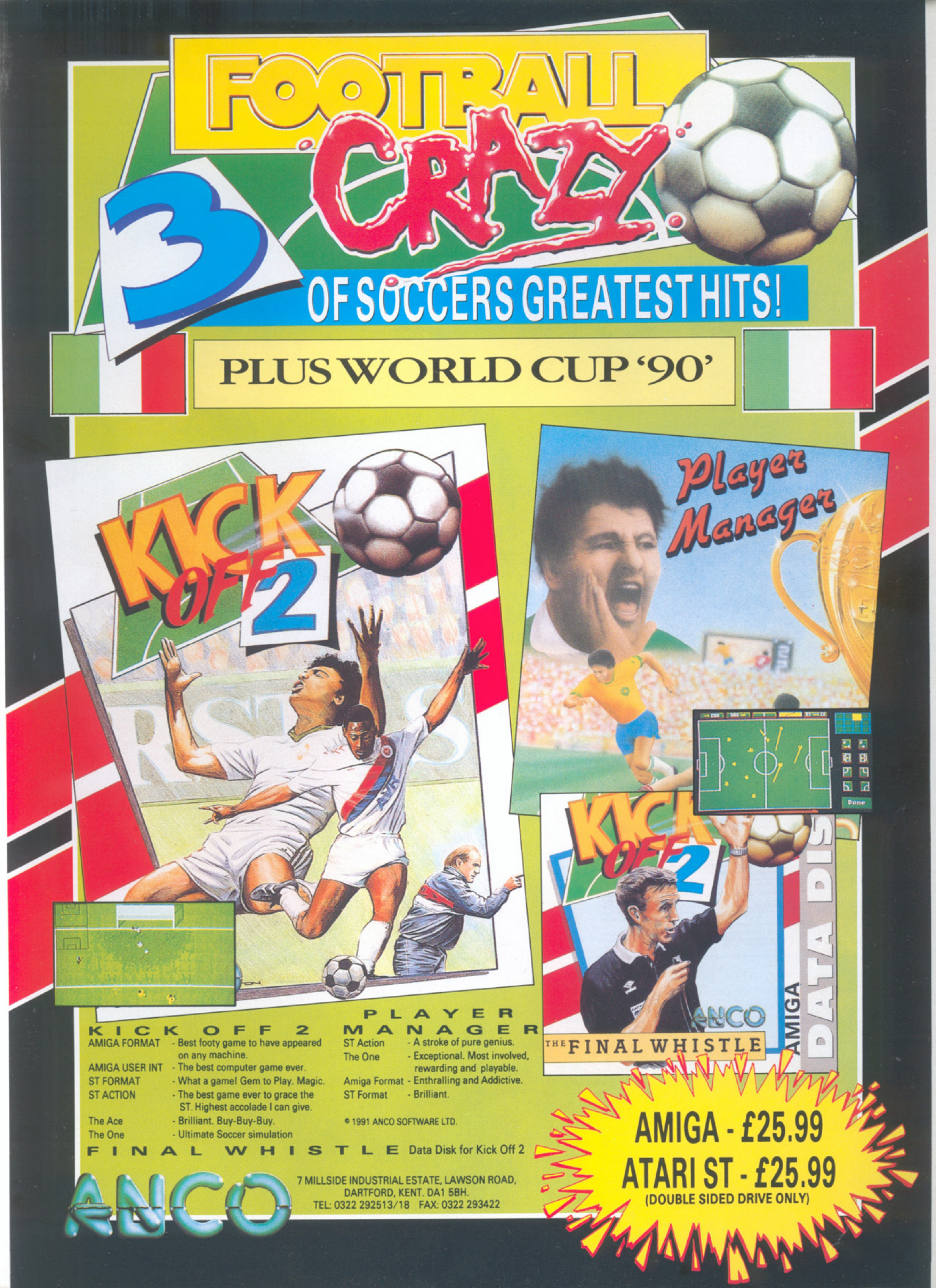
Plot-wise the tale is of a young lad captured by evil Skrols. His escape leads to a confrontation with the world's evil overlord. The lad is not alone in his struggle, though, at his side stands a friendly helper: Ratpouch. As well as being a bit of a Baldrick, the side-kick angle adds yet more to the game. Ratpouch naturally has his own personality but he follows the player's instructions – eventually. This means he can be sent on missions to carry messages or anything you want.

The Virtual Theatre system has taken 18 months to get running, but it will outlive Lure of the Temptress as the engine for future, maybe very different, games. "The system itself will eventually be split," Tony Wariner predicts. "There's a lot more we can do with the adventure engine, but we will also be working on different styles of display to make some future game's more arcadey."

Currently though, Revolution are striving to finish Lure of the Temptress. A limited and very early version of the game has been available for preview play and the potential is staggering. The adventure should begin early next year and it looks tempting indeed.

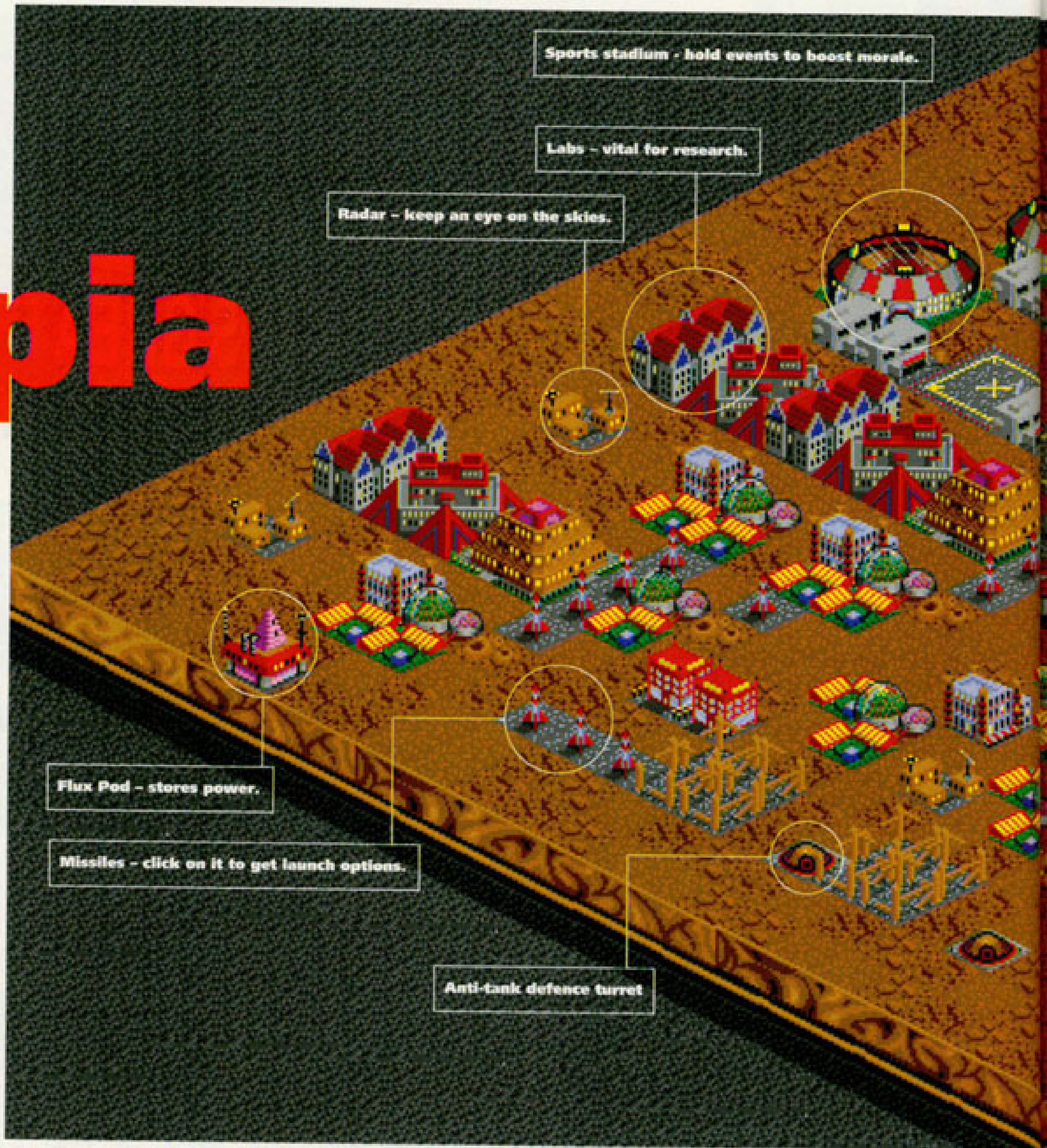


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Gremlin enter the god game arena. Is it just a version of Sim City in space or the beginning of a brave new world?

Utopia



The quality of life is as hard to quantify as it is to achieve. With thousands of years of historical luggage in tow it's nigh on impossible to reach Utopian standards on Earth. But when man moves into space and finds new worlds to colonise, lands with no established social or political problems, there is a chance to pushing up the quality of life to heights that are currently only dreamed of.

Building a Utopian space city is the aim. Starting with a deserted world, can you manage to construct a city that is safe, profitable and a pleasure to live in? Your success will be measured by the city's Quality Of Life (QOL). This abstract concept has been defined and hidden deep in the game. The closer you come to the ideal balance of industrial and social facilities, economic stability and a strong military, the higher the rating QOL gets. It sits at the top of the screen reminding you of how poorly things are going throughout the game.

Quality Of Life is not about moral, but reflects the long-term happiness of the people you command, not their current gripes. Bitter-tasting medicine can be prescribed in the short-term without affecting the QOL, but how short that term should be is up to you: the base commander. The ultimate aim is to push the QOL beyond 90 per cent, to literally Utopian heights. Medals for outstanding services to mankind are given at 80 per cent. but as you start the game at 50 per cent, pushing it up that extra 40 per cent takes long-term planning and a little bit of luck.

Bright lights

You begin each scenario with the bare essentials for a colony. There are a few living quarters, a life-support system, control centre, hydroponic farm, early-warning radar and warehouses. In the bank sit a huge pile of Grems (cash) and on the drawing-board sit a range of building designs. Using these you must build, defend and improve the city. Labs must be funded, so that research can push up the tech level, folks must be found for productive labour and weapons need to be developed for its defence.

The first task of any colony is to build. Everyday utilities have to be constructed – factories, houses and power stations – as do superfluous structures – sports stadiums, emergency control centres, defences. How many and where is largely determined by the available cash and manpower. Even in Utopia everything still costs either time or money. Buildings don't just appear, they have to be paid for in advance and take up to three game months to build.

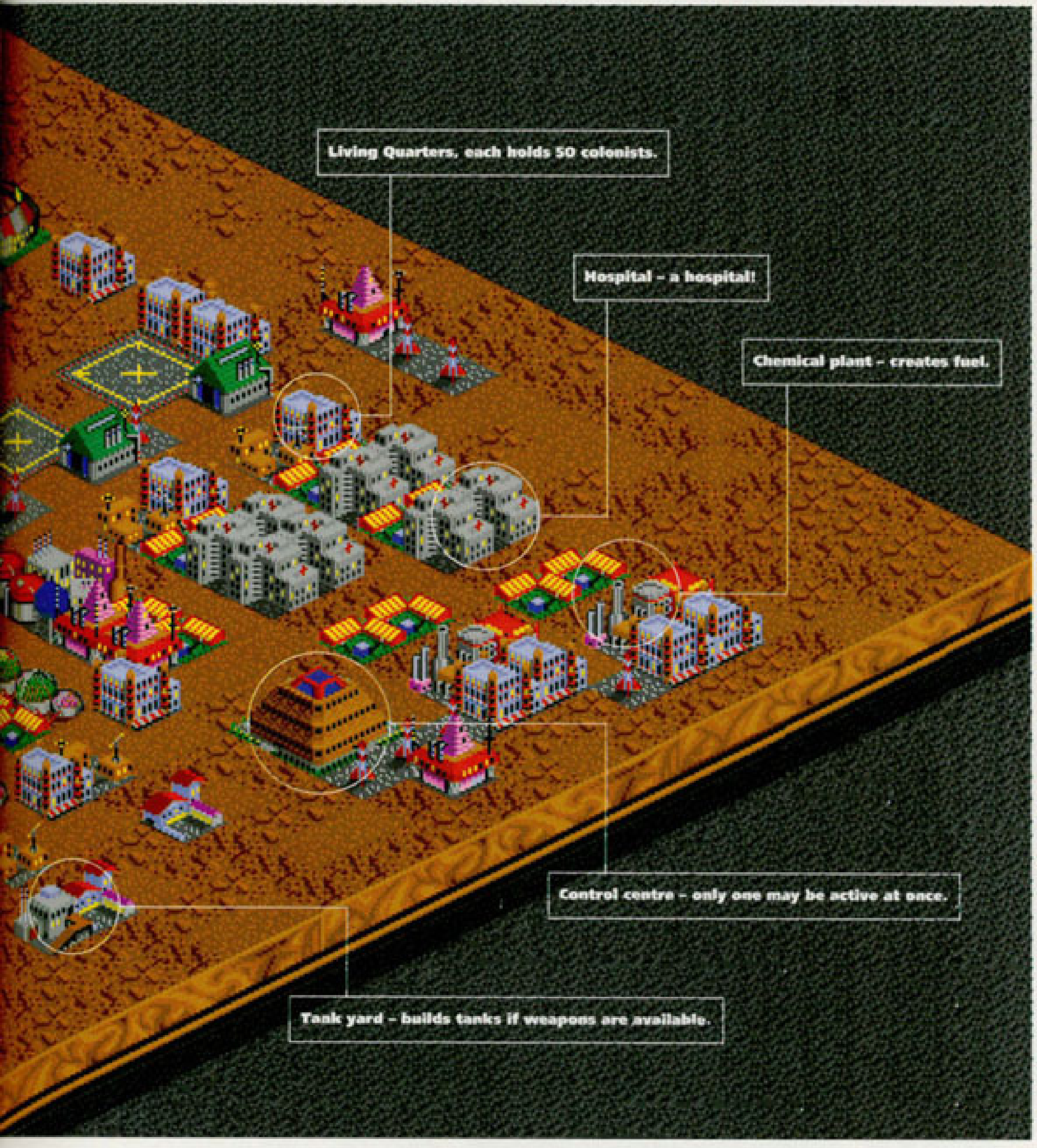
The building program is driven by two opposing motive forces, to satisfy the current demands of your people and to prepare for the future problems. Big ideas and experiments are continually held back by a mundane demand for more housing space, or more



Left – Your army commander tells who won which battle. Gives little real advice just keeps score.
Right – The City Counsellor, responsible for monitoring moral and the crime rate.
Far right – The City Administrator keeps tabs on exactly how many of each type of building there is in the colony.







stores. The gaming test is whether you satisfy these short-term needs or pursue long-term goals. It's impossible to follow either course exclusively and win, but it's the balance you strike that determines your fate.

Industrial strength

There's more to life than construction work though. As colony administrator you must make the calls on the financial, industrial and military matters too. What the colony makes it can either use or trade on the open market with other colonies. Industrially speaking if all your citizens are out building there will inevitably be a manpower shortage and if there's no one in the factories, then no goods are produced. Full employment also benefits the QOL, but only if it is in skill-based industry and not hawking bricks about.

Military goals are important in the short term, yet they do little to influence the QOL rating directly. The aliens will attack some time in the future and you must be ready, but the military angle eats cash and manpower. Victories against the aliens boost moral but do little for the QOL, while defeat can lead to catastrophe and the destruction of the colony.

Highlights

These colony worlds are mouse controlled with the occasional instance of number typing into financial tables. Whenever the cursor runs over the isometric 3D landscape, a large yellow square shows its position. To initiate an action you simply select an icon from the

A fascinating concept, well implemented, providing a test of crisis management.

right-hand panel and identify the square on the map you want affected. For example if you've previously specified a building through a sub-menu then scaffolding appears, if you've not selected anything then you'll get information.

The relationship between the icon panel and the game's screen is tight, with the city only slipping from view when the map or advisor screens are selected. At all other times the game carries on running, and you must pay continual attention if the visual clues of impending disaster are to be seen.

Spies like us

The major problem facing any Utopian colony commander is the alien threat. On the early low-level colonies you're given a breathing space before the slime suckers swoop in. This time can be used to develop a defence system or send out spies to gather information. Each alien race attacks in its own style and if you are to know which weapons to ready, then espionage is essential. There's always the option to launch a pre-emptive strike but this requires building of arms labs, tank factories, ship yards and considerable time.

The alien cities are never, seen, though and this is a major gripe. You can send out the best spies money can buy or hordes of tanks and ships to attack, but you never see it! Spy reports show static pictures, while you are simply informed of any losses incurred on the battlefield. The resulting effect is that the cities don't feel like they're real and the pressure they should impose is largely frittered away because they just are not a physically obvious threat. If you could manage to scroll over to their neck of the woods and watch them then the arms race metaphor would be visually underlined.

Contiriued overleaf





Far left – This 'person' is the head of research, keep giving him cash and labs for new kit.
Left – The production coordinator knows how efficient each factory has been. He'll tell you about storage problems too.
Right -- Financial advice comes from this guy, if you trade at a loss, then he'll tell you.



Panel beating, or how to control your growing colony from the safety of your own desk

From here you select the next building you want for the colony. Each will take between one to three months depending on its size and the available manpower.

Everybody makes mistakes, even big-gun space-city controllers (you). So to remove unwanted structures click on this icon and then on the offending building. It will then disappear.

Your financial decisions, trading surpluses and official grants, must be taken here. Most of the functions can be set to and left on automatic, freeing you from the bookkeeping.

Keeping a tab on what's being built and how many people they are building is essential. From here you manage all the recruitment and manpower allotments.



Pause on/off

This is your overall tactical view of the game. It can be altered to show how you stand in terms of fuel, weapons, radar coverage or ore. All action is frozen while you're looking at the map screen.

All vehicular movement is controlled using 'markers'. Once placed on the map, click on the vehicle and you'll be asked which marker you want the craft to move to, the rest is automatic.

These guys keep you on the straight and narrow with helpful hints and cutting comments. They can be accessed at any time with a quick press of keys 'F1 – F6'.

These guys may be spooks but they can supply vital early warning of incoming attacks and the nature of the enemies you will face. They cost the earth but can be real winners.

Disk options

In play, Utopia is a curious game, insidiously addictive but not gripping. The first burst is an enjoyable flurry of building and planning. Then, come the aliens, first contacted via spies, followed by combat. The resultant war of attrition takes time, but once you're on the road to victory the focus can be shifted back to the QOL rating. After beating back the green guys you've an infinite amount of time to tweak the colony structure, pushing the QOL percentage ever higher.

No win situation

The display and controls blend well together making it a game you want to toy around with, building here, sending tanks there. Yet the laudable aim of a high QOL isn't given enough bite. The open-ended nature of the game blurs the focus because you never actually win; sure you beat the aliens but there's no final sense of victory.

Graphically it functions well, providing a clear shorthand guide as to which buildings are where, and which are active. The isometric perspective becomes cluttered in bigger cities, making small objects hard to access accurately behind taller buildings. As the display can't be turned to get a better view it's frustrating when you accidentally trash your command centre.

The information screens, used for trading, industry and adviser's reports convey the stats but are reminiscent of spreadsheets. These look untidy and rely on keyboard input to change the figures. While far from a catastrophic flaw, it feels odd in a mouse-driven game.



Large investment in research yields concrete results. The science folk will send a message when they've discovered something useful.



When you want to pick a building and click on the build icon you are presented with this screen. Just click on the building then exit. The next time you click on the map you'll build that structure.

Dystopia?

Utopia is a fascinating concept that's been well implemented, providing a stern test of planning and crisis management. It's let down a little with the untidy-looking information screens and occasionally confusing perspective, but these can't disguise the game's depth and complexity. The overriding aim (Quality Of Life) is continually subverted by threats and crises, so managing anything above 80 per cent is quite an achievement. Its open-ended nature encourages continual play but detracts from the pace once you've beaten the aliens.

Utopia stresses balance, and equilibrium does not easily translate into victory. To achieve a high-powered life style you'll need an intuitive understanding of the QOL equation. This can be won by experimentation and evaluation of the game's responses. This won't appeal to all players but to the truly curious it will prove enthralling.

Trenton Webb



Bright lights, big city. Once the colony starts to grow you'll find your hands full keeping track of the everyday business to make improvements to the quality of life. 46 per cent is pitiful though you really must try harder Commander!

Utopia
Gremlin ■ £29.99

- Vast strategy/planning game with a neatly hidden secret.
- Spreadsheet figure screens look untidy.
- Open-ended nature means you never 'win'.
- An excellent example of a 'crisis' game.
- The playing style manages to evolve in parallel with the game.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **84%**

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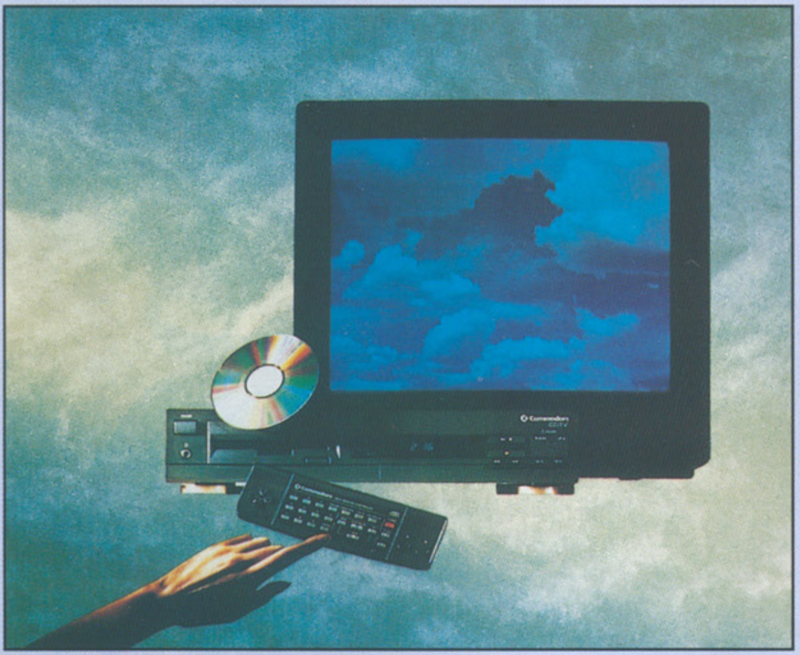
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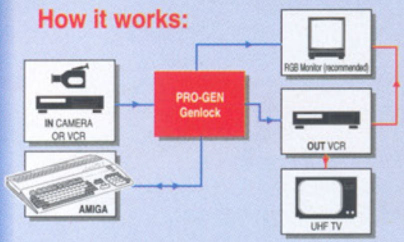
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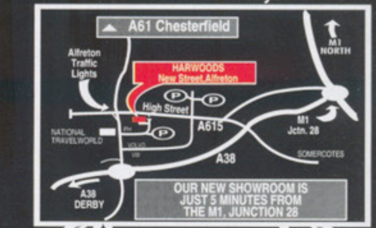
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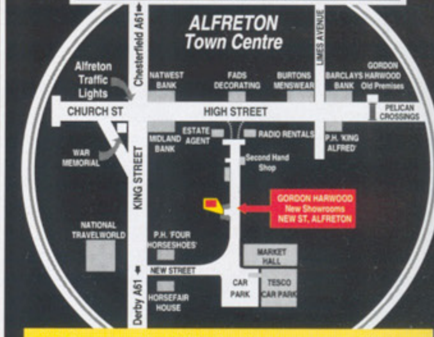
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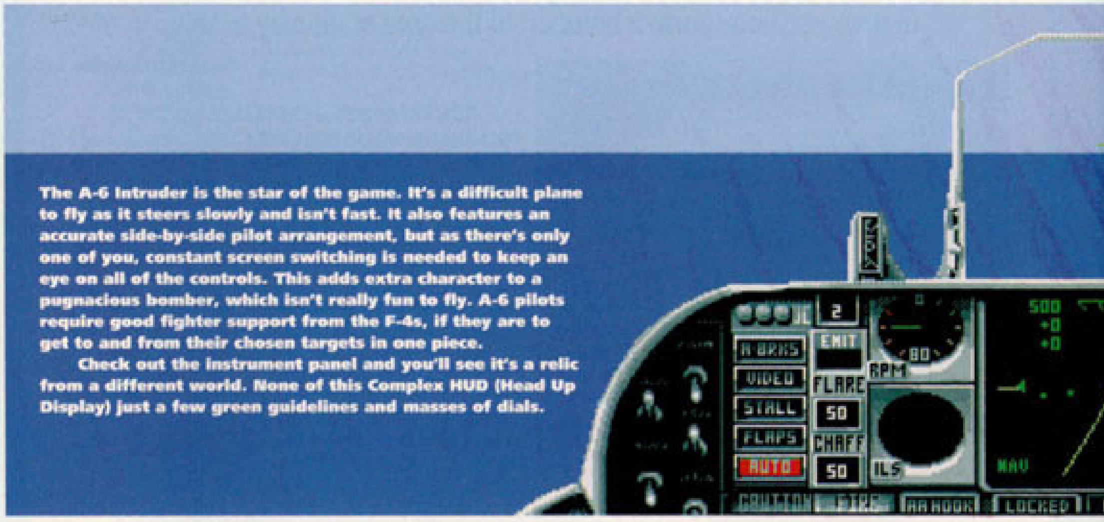
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Flight of the Intruder has been 'imminent' for over 10 months. Was it worth the wait for this novel-based flight simulation of the Vietnam War?



The A-6 Intruder is the star of the game. It's a difficult plane to fly as it steers slowly and isn't fast. It also features an accurate side-by-side pilot arrangement, but as there's only one of you, constant screen switching is needed to keep an eye on all of the controls. This adds extra character to a pugnacious bomber, which isn't really fun to fly. A-6 pilots require good fighter support from the F-4s, if they are to get to and from their chosen targets in one piece.

Check out the instrument panel and you'll see it's a relic from a different world. None of this Complex HUD (Head Up Display) just a few green guidelines and masses of dials.

Flight of th

Cold on the heels of the video of the film of the book, the *Flight* has finally touched down on the Amiga. The first major flight sim from Spectrum Holbrook since *Falcon* has been a long time coming (first advertised in *AF*17!). Was the problem over ambition or lack of ability?

Flight of the Intruder lets you fly two different aircraft over the hostile skies of Vietnam. The A-6 Intruder is still kicking around today, a tough and rugged bomber that gives as good as it gets. The F-4 Phantom is now a dinosaur, a supersonic jet with no cannon but more missiles than a MiG could eat. You get the chance to fly both, sometimes simultaneously, on raids down MiG alley, where SAM lives.

Scramble!

The first thing that hits you is the sheer volume of options offered and the complexity of the simulation. It's possible to leap straight into the fight using the 'scramble' option but if you don't alter the set-up you'll notice two problems: neither joystick or mouse have any control and the sea is solid – in an "I can't crash into it" sort of way. The game defaults to keyboard control and Rookie level. This isn't a criticism but an illustration of *Flight's* initial set up. You have to read the manual (all 200 pages worth!) and tailor the set up if you want to feel anything like *Flight's* full potential.



Screaming in from the sea an Intruder foolishly breaks the Rules of Engagement by going in to attack a NVA SAM site. At the top of the screen the pleas from his wingman tell another story, he's having real trouble keeping the bad guys off of your six. My six what though? Six pack? Six squid? Six Lord's a leaping!



The A-6 at the arming stage. It surely can't carry all these at one time. The Intruder is a rugged heavyweight in the payload.



Into the blue! Another successful launch an it's off to blast seven buckets out of downtown Siagon - well maybe if the rules allow that is?

All the options are available with a quick press of 'F10', then the menus are ready to pull down and customise the game. They offer everything from infinite fuel to realistic redouts, depending on what kind of flying nightmare you want. Rookie (virtually indestructible) is a good way to learn how these two beasts handle. Put everything on full realism and you'll wonder how anybody survived their first tour!

Bird brains

The A-6 is a slow, stick-in-the-mud sort of a plane, it feels like you're flying in treacle. The bird refuses to do anything fast, it turns reasonably tightly but lacks speed. With its considerable payload weight it lolls rather than rolls which makes it great to learn in. The F-4 is slick, fast, and born to fly. With its afterburning power it is an ideal fighter, but lacks things like guns! Dogfights rely totally on missiles and that means good position.

Flight offers pilots a whole range of missions, but that doesn't set it aside from normal plane games. What does, though, is the sheer depth of preparation. From mission briefings you slip into the map room for some waypoint planning and discussions of the rules of engagement, then it's off to the armoury to choose some major munitions, then it's back to briefing hall just to make sure you know where to go and who to kill. Many games offer these features, but few offer them all and none have *Flight's* gloss.

Once on deck before you've time to work out which command launches the catapult (CTRL L) it happens automatically and you're thrown out to sea. Peering over the edge of the cockpit you can see a flat blue ocean which neatly features perspective dots to help pilots gauge their relative height. If your memory fails you as to what the myriad of key commands do then just hit 'A' for autopilot and simply experiment.

Take a peek at the outside views and you'll find the craft are solid and realistic representations of themselves. Although playing with the afterburner reveals some odd graphics. When they're off trails appear and when they're on the engine ports turn yellow!





The F-4 getting ready for a fight. A good fighter, it lacked that one simple requirement for good dogfighting: a machine-gun!

e Intruder



The F-4 in action. It has this other plane dead to rights but better not shoot as he's the wingman support for the mission. The lead plane hasn't got it's afterburners on and yet it's showing red trails. This odd graphic is one of the few flaws to be found in Flight's 3D environment.

The missions you fly are tough, not just because an awful lot of Vietnamese pilots would like to give you swimming lessons, but *Flight's* historical accuracy has a go at you too. At the time of the Linebacker raids there were some jolly combat guidelines called the Rules Of Engagement. These effectively said which targets were legitimate and which were not. For example, most SAM sites were off limits to bombing simply because there were likely to be Russian technicians there! If you want to work your way up the rank ladder then these must be scrupulously obeyed. Take on a few of the missions and you soon start to realise what 'fighting a war with one arm tied behind your back' – George Bush circa 1991 – really felt like.



So you see we go in from the blue bit and aim for the green bit. Then we press that red button that drops things and then we head back.

Flight plays this historical accuracy card all through the game, creating the scenario and dictating your conduct. The munitions are as realistic as the planes. Most of the time this benefits the game, with neat effects like ground clutter screwing up the F-4's radar every time the nose points towards the floor.

As an overall package, this historical bundle, while thorough, does restrict the game. The two planes, while they are neat period pieces, are far from the most exciting aircraft that were ever built. The scenarios too are limited by the Rules of Engagement and the kind of munitions that cam be carried. The stress on the novel also ensures that the carrier remains in the one theatre of operations. The work that brings the novel to life is thorough indeed, but a novel isn't the ideal situation for a really gripping Vietnam air-war sim.

Flight looks the biz, with masses of peripheral graphic screens. It's set-up flexibility is laudable, with most aspects of the game on offer for tweaking. Some good ideas have been incorporated such as a comms link and flight information being displayed during outside views. The accuracy factor restricts the range though, which can be frustrating. *Flight* is finally here and where the extra man hours went is obvious, but the strictures of the novel – its historical setting and vehicular limitations – hold the game back, a bit.

Trenton Webb

Flight of the Intruder
Mirrorsoft ■ £34.99

- *Falcon* goes to Vietnam!
- Huge range of options, so the game can be tailored to fit the player.
- The historical set-up is atmospheric but limits the game's range.
- The two planes fly really well and very differently.
- A techie flight simulator with real polish.

Verdict 88%

Look out - he's back!

PAPERBOY 2

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Head tries to get to the doughnut stash. That little droid in the corner is a real pain. Activated randomly it will start to hunt down anything moving. Head and Heels, each have differnt abilities.This guy's a better jumper than Heels but can't move that fast, so they must use leaping skill alone to soar over enemies and reach the goodies. Heels is faster and must use his speed.

Head Over Heels

I hate this game, not in a rational or critical way, but with an instinctive loathing that is hard to quantify. When writing reviews of 8-bit games I hated it. I'd escaped to the Amiga, but only to find them hunting me down here too. This exhibits some of the worst tendencies ever seen in computer gaming, it looks terrible, is over five-years old and I'm not very good at it!

Z80

A common slight of reviewers is to liken 16-bit graphics to those of the Spectrum, but for once, this is truly justified. Head Over Heels is drawn in pixely patches of single colours, there's little shading and no subtlety. They can, at best, be described as self-mockingly jolly. On top of this, the action is displayed in an isometric mock-3D perspective. If you've never played a game in this mode, then you don't know the frustrations that come from having all your joystick commands twisted through 45 degrees. It's unnatural and incredibly hard to map.

Head Over Heels sounds as bad as it looks, with jingle tunes that jangle the nerves and sound effects that hiss their way through the speaker. A silly sound track is fine for cute games, but they need to be above the Benny Hill standard set here. These are the reasons I hate the game is it simply feels too bad to be good. But much to my chagrin it is good, good in the extreme.

The tale consists of two strange symbiotic creatures: Head and Heels. When together they can link up and share their skills but when separated one has the edge in terms of horizontal speed, while the other can leap tall things in a single bound. These two cutesy types begin the game at opposite ends of a dungeon-like complex. The first aim is to get the two of them together, which requires much flipping between the characters, negotiating of traps and masses of mapping.



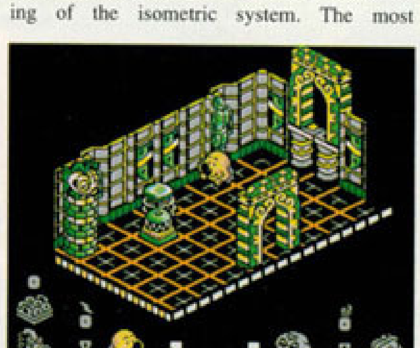
Heels begins the game here. Head can wander into this room and watch him, but the two cannot unite because of the large yellow fence. Part One of the game is all about getting them together.

Fatal attraction

Most rooms in the maze contain a single, fatal puzzle. These problems test joystick agility, lateral thinking and your intuitive understanding of the isometric system. The most common of these tests involve deadly floors and a series of floating platforms which have to be leapt upon. If you're not totally familiar with the oddities of such a 3D system, then misjudgement can be a frequent killer.

Once Head and Heels are joined, then the game puts the hooks in. You wander around a bit feeling all hunky, with the abilities of both creatures combined. Then you're forced to break the partnership by yet more puzzles. It's frustrating as hell, all that work smashed to pieces by another series of mind and joystick twisters. But it does force you to get stuck in, so they can be reunited again.

Luckily *Head over Heels* is littered with humorous touches, many of which disguise sly gameplay agents. The Reincarnation fish for instance, is effectively a system that allows you to restart the game where you last touched a fish. It neatly side-steps the need for a saves disk while encouraging continual play, because these points are only saved in RAM.



That green springy stool can be pushed around to sit underneath the door. This opens up new avenues for you to explore. Most of HOH follows this interactive pattern.

Tweaky

The playability has been banged to rights. There's even a chance to tweak the controls before you get started, tailoring the game towards your own particular style. This, combined with an excellently judged pace, are all that 8-bit wonder from yesteryear has to offer the modern 16-bit gamester. It looks like a game from the Stone Age, but its split-character design remains as challenging as ever.

I still hate *Head Over Heels*. The garish graphics and tinny sound are soon submerged in the twisted world of isometric mazes, floating platforms and fatal traps. It's definitely not to everyone's taste (especially mine) but then £8 is not that big a gamble!

Trenton Webb

Head Over Heels
Hit Squad ■ £7.99

- Appalling graphics.
- Dire sound.
- Brilliant split-character set-up.
- Incredibly well designed game and highly playable.
- A relic that retains its charm despite the effects handicaps.

Amiga Format Verdict **79%**


FIRST SAMURAI
IMAGE WORKS
Long ago in a tiny village in Ancient Japan . . .
a young Samurai lived and studied peacefully with his master the Lord Akira, until . . . . . .
a Demon King descended from his mountain to destroy the village and all its inhabitants . . .
slaying the Warrior Lord and leaving only the young Samurai to tell the tale.
He called upon the Wizard Mage who forced the Demon to flee into the future leaving the Land at peace.
However, the Samurai vowed he would have no peace until he had avenged his master's death with the aid of the wizard.
So armed with a magic sword our hero followed the Demon through time to year 2323 and . . .
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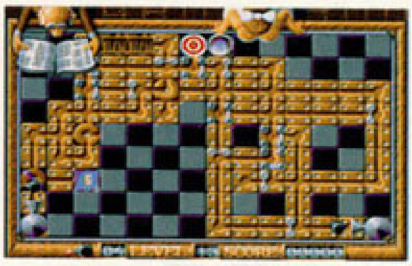


Left – Some fool has let a baby lose at the BBC (Boston Bomb Club). He crawls across the table at the most inopportune moments resting all the gates and switches he touches. Even more annoying is the fact that he seems impervious to the effects of high explosives!

That guy with the paper covers up a vital corner of the table. You can only see what tiles are there when he turns a page of the paper.



To select your start point just click on one of these gents, left to right being level 1-20.



Boston Bomb Club

Good evening and welcome to the BBC. Of course this isn't the BBC but *The* BBC, The Boston Bomb Club. These boys were doing the rounds in the late 19th century, way before Logi Baird invented the crystal bucket. An off-the-wall puzzle test, it's about a bunch of mad, but competitive, scientists. They created a game so fiendish, so dangerous, so silly, that society conspired to keep its very existence a secret. Now their story can be told.

BBC1

The aim is to move a bomb across a pool table into a bucket of water. The bombs come in Buster Keaton flavour: black balls with string fuses, which are of course alight – adding urgency to the affair. The pool table is covered with widgets and other Heath Robinson contraptions, that can be manipulated to guide the rolling lump towards the safety of the bucket.

BBC is largely intuitive, the table top is full of grooved wooden channels, so the bomb's progress can be easily predicted. At certain junctions sit switches which can be used to deflect the bomb along another route. These aren't the only tricks in this explosive little puzzle number, scattered across the table top are trampolines, disappearing floors, random gates and many stranger devices. All of these are controlled with the mouse, one click toggling them on or off.

If life wasn't hard enough already, other members of the Club try sabotaging your attempts. Some of which is an innocent oversight: letting a newspaper cover the playing area. Some, however, are premeditated: you see arms reaching out and flicking the switches that you've just aligned.

It isn't hard to progress through the levels as only one bomb per table is needed to progress. Scoring is important – it is a puzzle game after all – and to get a points explosion you'll need to defuse every bomb and grab any bonus. Getting both are difficult, often a route towards the bucket has to be totally reworked once one bomb has fallen, while the bonuses are always placed in inaccessible corners of the game.

BBC2

The *BBC* puts its TV counterpart to shame, oozing gloss and graphic humour. The screens are finely drawn, creating the right tone for this Victorian, scientific send up. Terry Thomas-like rotters lean over the table to stop you winning, crazed jazz musicians pop on screen for no apparent reason and buxom barmaids sit doing what buxom barmaids do best.

Many of these graphics are peripheral and add humour. Some exceed this decorative role and reinforce the gameplay. The most obvious are the paper readers, whose broadsheets hide the edges of the board. The route to the bucket will always pass under them and the tiles below are only revealed when they turn pages, so you're forced to keep one eye on them whilst juggling live bombs in other parts of the maze. It's a vicious and inspired addition.

There are 30 levels and because of the overall limit of levels it starts tough and gets tougher. Yet if you can take the pace, and adapt to puzzlers quickly you should race through the entire game.

There isn't a great difference between this and puzzles like *Logical*, but it does feature distinct improvements. First the introduction of a graphic theme is a plus, giving the game instant appeal. The setting also allows sight gags to muscle in on the act, lightening the atmosphere. The innovation comes in graphic form too, with touches like the saboteurs. The resulting package is a polished puzzle.

Trenton Webb

Toilet humour! Somehow you must engineer the route so the bombs hit the blue trampoline and bounce into the bowl. Once sunk they'll reappear in the bucket and be safely defused.



Boston Bomb Club
Palace ■ £25.99

- Steep and sudden learning curve.
- A puzzle game with real personality.
- 30 levels are too few, it deserves more.
- The sweet graphic touches show real design flair.
- A polished puzzle package that lacks long-term legs.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 74%

In the Second World War, being a submariner was incredibly dangerous. Proportionally, six times as many servicemen died in US submarines than in the rest of the American Navy. For the men who served, it was the greatest gamble, but when they got it right, the rewards were enormous. And for the US Admiralty, it was worth it.

Silent Service II places you in command of a American boat (that's sub to you and me) in the Pacific at the height of Japanese seapower. You can choose from a list the type of your vessel (all historically accurate) and can set the difficulty level. Then you're on your own. And it's a big ocean.

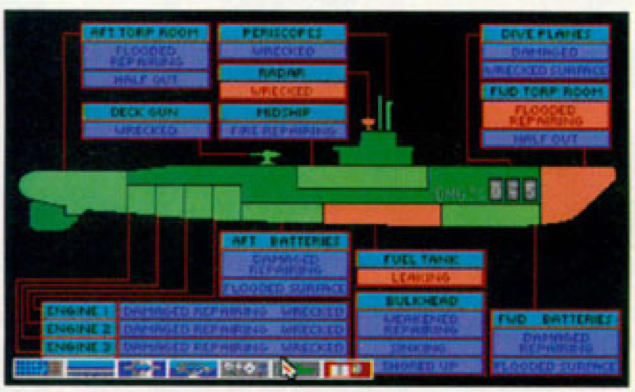
The thing with submarines is that unless you're on the surface (or within periscope depth) there is no way of seeing what's going on. You must rely on a chart compiled by your crew members which tells you your heading, bearings to the enemy and, by way of trails, the speed everyone's moving. All other decisions are up to you.

It's a direct hit on a freighter. This is the view as seen from the surfaced sub. Whilst you get a better idea of what the target ships are up to, it's very dangerous to go above periscope depth. A lone freighter can't muster much in the way of offensive weaponry, though, so it's by far the easiest way of lining up on your target. And you also get a great view of the resulting explosions.



Silent Service II

Can you stand the pressure of command or will you sail your crew into deep water? Look out for that destroyer! Dive! Dive! Dive!



Worse things happen at sea. Checking your damage screen shows you just how much can go belly-up when you've been depth-charged.

A view from the Bridge

It's advisable to start off on a practice level which pits you against several unarmed hulks lying dead in the water. Pretend they're the enemy, sneak up to them then fill 'em full of torps. Sounds easy, doesn't it? Well it isn't. You can safely surface, which gives you an outside view, but where you're looking isn't necessarily where you're heading. Sort this out and you should be in a position to give your helmsman an intercept course to target. When in range, the torpedoes' running times appear. Fire too early and not only are the targets too small, but the torpedoes might run out of fuel before reaching their targets. If you're too close they haven't got time to arm before striking the enemy hulls.

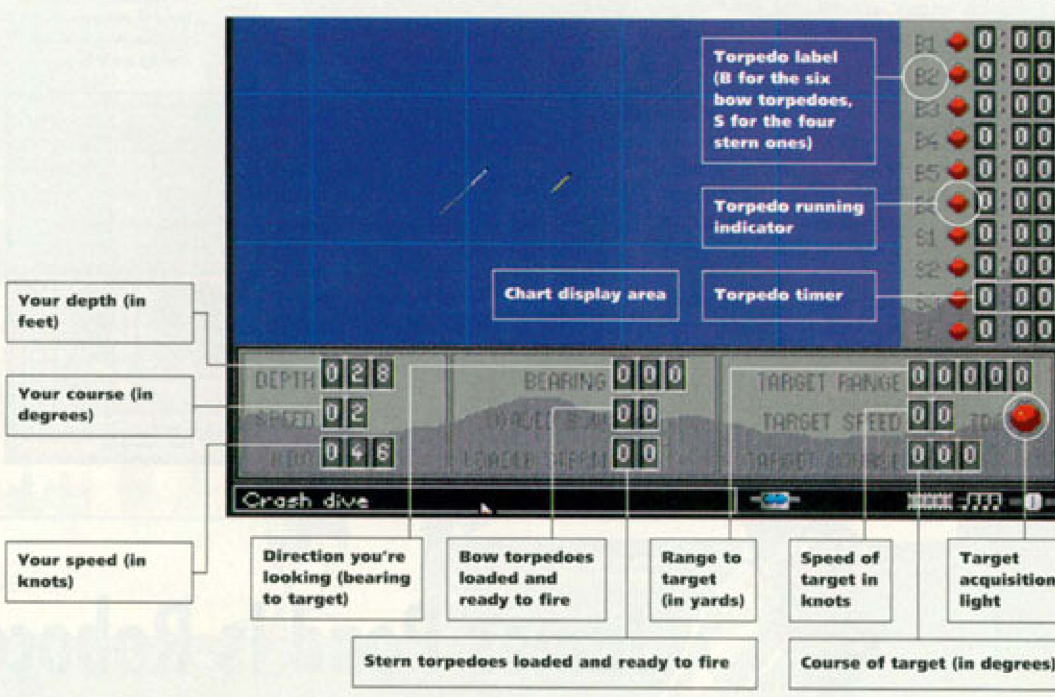
So as you manoeuvre, you must always be aware of your speed, depth and heading. If you can do all this and keep the enemy firmly in your periscope sights, you might even have the makings of a Richard Widmark.

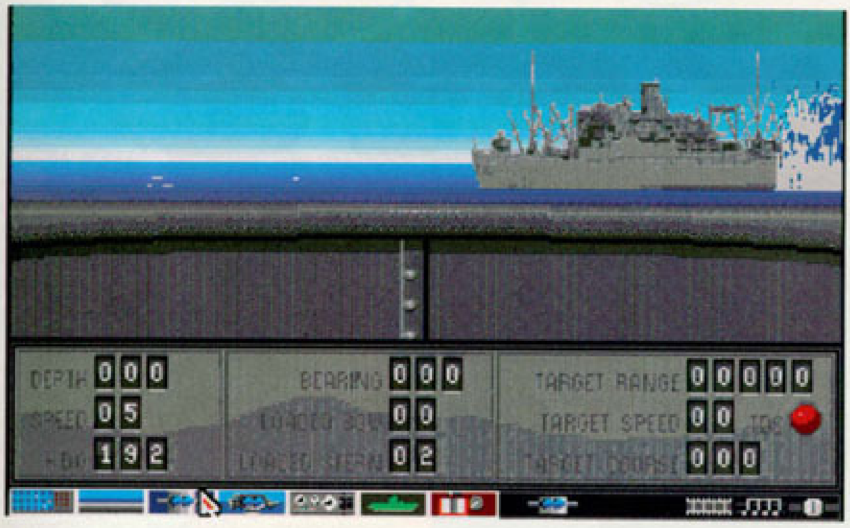
When you're playing against 'live' Japanese ships you have a certain amout of time before they are aware of you, so you must slide quickly into an effective killing position, then fire off a spread. This means loosing off all four forward torpedoes whilst turning slightly, so they cover a few degrees. It's a compromise, but it ups the chances of at least one hitting. As the Japanese stick close together in convoy and present one big target, with luck they all might score.

Death of a sailsman

The waiting game begins. It takes a minute or two at extreme range for the fish to get to their targets, so as soon as you fire, dive, then change course and watch the timers. If you get hits, you'll hear the explosions, If you've missed, run! The destroyers will be after you. Destroyers are a submariner's nightmare. They're faster than you, they can hear you and they've got depth-charges.

Ideally, you should be at a safe depth and heading in a direction they'll never suspect. That's the theory. In practice you'll sneak to the surface to take a peek at the damage you've caused or even blast away with the 4" deck gun. But what you'll usually see will make your blood freeze. Destroyers and cruisers, having spotted your periscope or, if you've surfaced, your sail (conning tower), will be heading towards you like huge steel knives. Unless you can out-think them you'll





The most dangerous position of all is standing on top of the conning tower (or sail) whilst you're in the middle of an attack. Here, you can whoop with glee as another torpedo smacks into the side of that Japanese freighter. At this close range it's better to use the 4" deck gun and blast away merrily as the crew reload your torpedo tubes for the next cunning strike on your foe.

be depth charged causing painful damage to your boat. There's a damage screen which you can call up, which has percentages for each part of the sub. Your engines might be hit, the aft structure could be weakened or, at worst, flooding could occur. If it does, at least you'll be buried at sea.

The cruise sub hull

Monitoring your sub's systems when not under direct fire is just as important as battle techniques. The Pacific gets quite deep in places, and if you dive hard, you could find yourself buckling and groaning under the pressure. But it's preferable to having 18 inch shells landing on your deck. The whole game is about making split-second decisions like this, and as you play you learn a lot about the loneliness of command.

The game is split into campaigns and single missions. The missions generally put you in a favourable position with a convoy of merchantmen, a group of cruisers or, if you're ambitious aircraft carriers or even the Yamato herself, the biggest battleship the world has seen (so take that, USS Iowa!). You get straight into the action, and the game takes about half an hour, depending on your tactics.

Incident at Taipei

If you choose a campaign, you get the entire Pacific to roam. You'll be given an initial mission, and must chug along for days until you get to your target area. Luckily, Microprose have speeded up the uneventful bits. Campaigns allow you to be more flexible, in that where you position yourself or even whether you decide to attack is up to you. You can break off an engagement to go after some less tough prey if you choose. A map of the ocean with all ports, islands and shallow reaches is included, so you've no excuse for getting lost.

If you can do all this and keep the enemy firmly in your periscope sights, you might have the makings of a Richard Widmark



American subs have on board opthalmic testing equipment you get your glasses in 1 hr.



The yellow lines are ranging bars. When they light up, your target is slap bang in the sights. And slap bang is exactly what will happen.

Silent Service is detailed, exciting and clever. If you've more than a passing interest in sub operations, you'll get hooked. The graphics are impressive where they count. A lot of work has gone into the look of the Imperial Japanese Navy and it shows.

The systems you control are nicely handled, with clickable icons for each function as well as a keyboard overlay. It's no more complicated than, say, F19. But where Silent Service II scores highest is in the atmosphere. Playing hide and seek with a heavily-beweaponed aircraft carrier is tough, scary and very addictive. Find out if you've got the stubble for it with Silent Service II. You could surprise yourself.

James Leach

You're in deep water now.



The engagements supplied with Silent Service II are all based on real situations. Could you handle things better than the pros?

1. Whales And Duds
You're in a Gato class sub one morning in 1943 when you meet a converted whaler carrying Japanese oil supplies. It's a turkey shoot, but how do you kill her off cleanly?

2. Mush on the Loose
You're Dudley "Mush" Morton in a Gato. You've just spotted three unarmed merchant ships. Do you a) sink them, b) cripple them or c) invite their crews to a game of sardines in the aft torpedo tubes?

3. Flasher's Tankers
You command the Flasher (a real WWII Gato) when you meet two destroyers and a tanker. Which do you go for first? Or you could get really close and expose yourself. Er, to hostile fire.

4. Sink the Yamato
Your Gato has seen the mighty Yamato with a strong escort. It'll take some killing, so how do you go about it? If only you could leave the area and call in a massive bombing raid...

5. Death of the Shinano
It's a night attack, so wrap up warm and take a torch. The Shinano is a large battleship, but if you get close enough you can put four torps into her hull before she can say "Amelican sub crosing in fast!"

6. Killer O'Kane
Night. But you're Killer (a man blessed with compound vision). A ten-ship convoy has been plotted on your chart. It's party time, but which are the escorts? Are you sure they're not Sierras?

7. An embarrassment of Riches
The Shokaku, a Japanese carrier, has been seen. Sure, there are destroyers around, but that flat-top is asking for a spread right up the propellers.

Silent Service II
Microprose ■ £30.99

- Hunting 45,000 tonners has never been such fun. The atmosphere is just right.
- Icon-driven control and keyboard overlay means work well. It's made as simple as such a complex subject can be.
- Slightly specialised - it's enough of a sim to leave you out in the cold.
- Graphics and sound are good. The in-sub screens are also done well. Yes, there are sweaty men with caps and pullovers too.
- Whatever you do in the campaigns doesn't ultimately change anything. It always ends suddenly on a sunny morning in August 1945. Nice one, Mr Truman, sir.

Amiga Format Verdict 82%

The geeks are coming! Or rather, the geeks are unfortunately already here and are hell-bent on destroying the earth. The year is supposedly 2967, and the Startroopers of the United People face their toughest struggle yet in the ten year war against the evil invaders. They are ectoplasmic bug-eyed monsters of all sizes and zoological classifications. They carry power-tools and use them recklessly. They are the sort of creature you bump into down the Do-It-All on hungover Sunday mornings.

Killing time

But now they've stolen a time-machine and are infiltrating the past in the hope of destroying human history. One solo Startrooper must venture back to the corrupted time zones and undo the damage they have wrought. So off we venture, on a monotonous journey through Earth's past. What follows is a series of tedious platform shoot-em-up levels in which geeks need to be destroyed and hostages – for a token plot gesture – must be rescued.

The hostages, we are told, are in fact key members of each time-zones scientific community. The geeks figure that kidnapping them will prevent their discoveries and inventions leading to the technologicaly-advanced society of 2967 AD that the geeks are having such a problem conquering. To complete each level, you must rescue ten conventional and then one final hostage. Held behind locked doors for which you must find a key, this eleventh man is the last barrier between yourself and a confrontation with the head geek – victory earning you passage to the next time-zone.



We are never outgunned! At least while you've got five way firepower you're not. Masses of shots do make life easier but you still have to avoid the Warrior eating plants, the flaming walls, rescue the hostages, stay alive and get home!

Zone Warrior



In the armoury your everyday, run of the mill Zone Warrior can be transformed into a starship trooper. When you enter you willbe confronted with three different coffins. Each one contains a different gift, but you can only open the one. And the only way to tell what's in each locker is to open it!

Get those geeks!

Upgrading your standard 1-way Hyperblaster is best done as quickly as possible. Picking up the relevant power-up icon transforms your blaster to a Turrican-style three-way, then even a five-way, blaster. Other power-ups include a cluster gun, a Flamethrower that narrow-mindedly adheres to its name tag and throws flame, and X-bombs. All these and more completely fail to add an exciting variation to your armoury. Got all that? Good – they're all just a power-up icon away.

And so the game goes on. And on. And on. A poor-mans Turrican, Zone Warrior is a sad example of an ill-designed platform shoot-em-up tarted up with fancy presentation and an 'original' plot. The graphics are lousy and sprite collision detection is at times seemingly random. Our hero looks like an old 8-bit sprite and moves as if he has had a cucumber inserted where it shouldn't be, while the cannon-fodder baddies unconvincingly flicker on and off the screen. Does Zone Warrior have any redeeming points? Yes – the music's quite good. But unfortunately, that's about all that can be said for it.

Neil West



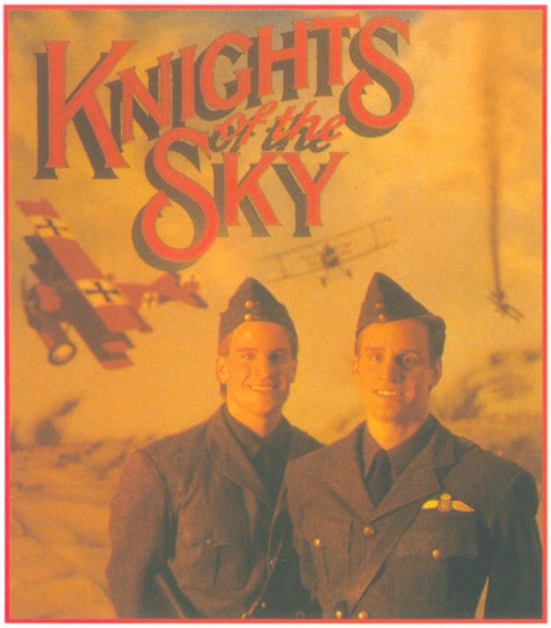
The primary objective of Zone Warrior is to rescue a bunch of hostages. Whne you get on screen you hear them yelling. Get in there and do your hero thang ZW. Save the girl and save the world!

Zone Warrior
Electronic Arts ■ £25.99

- Tedious Turrican clone with all of the faults but none of the saving graces.
- Good presentation sequences, but awkward dual-disk loading.
- Fast, but unimaginative graphics and repetitive level design.
- Nothing to inspire the imagination. A poor, dated example of the genre.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 36%

Knights Of The Sky









Dogfights, Duels and Daring

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IBM and Amiga screen shots shown. Actual shots may vary.

In the gallant tradition of the ancient knights, you can even challenge an opponent to a direct head-to-head dogfight on connected computers to determine who is truly World War I's Ace of Aces.

Knights of the Sky will be winging its way into all good software stores soon for your Commodore Amiga, and is already flying high for IBM PC Compatibles.

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An evening in front of the telly goes horribly, horribly wrong and PJ Barret finds himself drawn into the second-worst TV-related experience a guy can go though. After mysteriously bumping into a freaked-out warrior on the sidewalk, his evening at home is cut short when he finds himself sucked through his television set into the alternative reality of Daltere.

I said this was the second-worst TV nightmare. The real worst mare is far too grim to darken the pages of a decent family magazine – let's just say that it involves Esther Rantzen, Lionel Blair, a bath full to the brim with custard, a red triangle in the top corner of the screen and the adjudicating eye of Norris McWyrtre with a stopwatch. Things that make you go, mmm.

Wandering about Daltere is the only way to discover all its secrets. If only it didn't take so long! Still, I suppose this is one game that won't be finished overnight.



Altered Destiny

OK, so you're in a strange exotic alien-infested world. Does that mean that PJ has to cancel his plans for a good time? Surely not. Altered Destiny allows the player to Look–Search–Pick-up–Use–Talk–etc, PJ through his new world on a voyage of discovery. Talk to aliens, solve puzzles, search for clues and generally 'check-out' Daltere. The world, my dear PJ, is your lobster.

Time to head North, South, East or West...

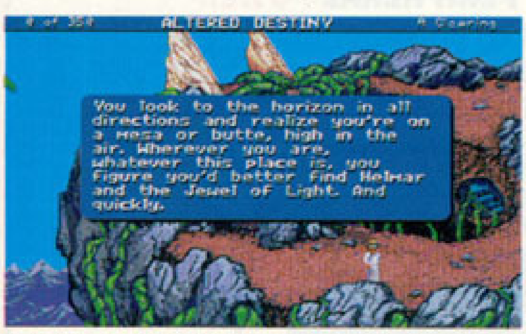
And so the game unfolds, in standard RPG fashion. The game-commands are interspersed with screen illustrations, providing landmarks by which to map your progress. Guide PJ East, West, North and South, seek out and explore strange new worlds, boldly go where no man has gone before – you know the sort of stuff. Actually, mapping is a good idea as this is a BIG adventure – six disks chocked to the gills worth of adventure to be exact. Save games regularly, don't be afraid to experiment and Altered Destiny has the potential to provide you with an entertaining break from reality.

PJ Barret – Truly a man amongst aliens

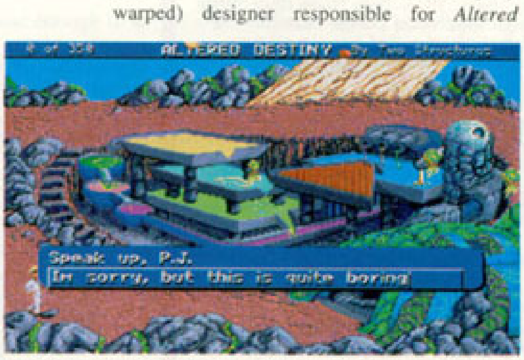
Michael Berlyn is the (ever-so-slightly warped) designer responsible for *Altered Destiny*. Evidently he taught science-fiction writing at Harvard University, so he should really know his stuff. Maybe he does – the game-plot flows quite convincingly and there are lots of nice little touches. For example: talk to Alnar the Metal Shaper by all means, but don't shake his hand – it secretes acid! Possibilities for all the business-executives out there, I'm sure…

But everything is just so painstakingly slow, you'll be sick to bleedin' death of PJ bloody Barret long before coming anywhere close to realising the potential that the story may have to offer. Disk accessing is somewhat sluggish (to say the least) and moving PJ about the playing area takes forever. Compare *Altered Destiny* to *The Secret of Monkey Island* and PJ's deficiencies are forced even further home. Whereas Guy Thistlebrush merely needed to be aimed in the right direction, PJ however, has to be painfully inched pixel by pixel around the screen. *Monkey Island* kept the pace up, *Altered Destiny* shoots itself in the foot.

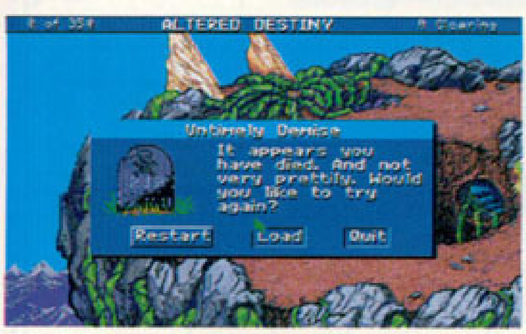
Neil West



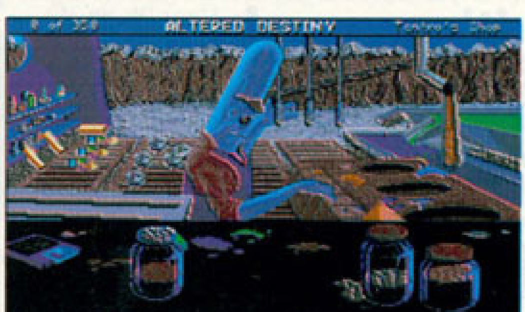
At the very start of the game PJ finds himself in a clearing. Oh yes, you see that gap leading off the edge of the cliff? Well take a piece of advice, don't try jumping off it. You'll end up waiting a decade for the game to restart.



That's much more like it! The water bubbles, aliens walk by and PJ slows down from a slug's pace to snail's space. I wonder what exactly is in that cave? I'm sorry, but this is boring.



Don't worry PJ! It's only an ancient sign-post. Read the message and take notes, if for no other reason than it took long enough to get here.



Ah, now this guy is very useful. Tentro's store sells all sorts of goodies. But you'll have to find out what exactly, by yourself...

Altered Destiny
Accolade ■ £29.99

- Slower than a particularly relaxed sloth.
- Awkward disk accessing exaggerates the problem further.
- Good illustrative graphics, but the movement is jerky and slows with detail.
- There's an Interesting plot fighting to get out, but it's up against some pretty stiff opposition.
- Buy Monkey Island instead!

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **54%**

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DEATHBRINGER
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EMPIRE



On his travels, Ronny will meet a whole menagerie of nasties, all ready and willing to inflict themselves upon him! Watch out for those nasty birds Ronny, they might just deposit something unfriendly...

Ronny's four pockets are full at the moment, with various goodies. He's got a SuperJump, a MegaHonk, a MagnetoFluct and a PowerSneeze to help him on his way.

Rolling Ronny

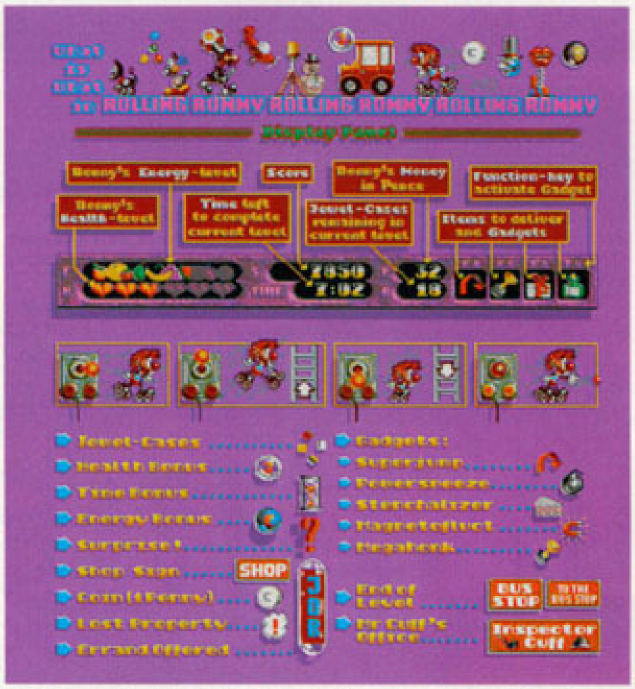
Rolling Ronny is an errand-boy – his task is to deliver parcels and the like all over town, wherever his customers want. Ronny is a funny character, kitted out with a pair of roller skates, a bright red bushy wig (for visibility) and a huge red hooter of a nose (for attention), he's definitely not inconspicuous. In this game, his job description has been changed from simple deliveries to a top secret police matter.

Moonlighting

For his latest adventure, Ronny has been commissioned by Scotland Yard to do some undercover work. A vicious gang of thieves made off with the ultra-valuable Fieldington Crown Jewels, but luckily for Fieldington's regency, the bandits were rumbled before they could leave the country. In an attempt to get rid of the evidence, the rascals hid them in small brightly coloured jewel cases and concealed them (not very well) all over Fieldington. The Yard decided that an undercover agent would best suited to the recovering the Crown Jewels and who better than Ronny? Nobody would suspect anything of an errand boy, scooting around town on his skates, collecting things.

Cheese and Sneeze

You take the roll of Ronny (ho ho). To help him on his travels and protect him from nasties, he has a supply of Fieldington's best salami, which when thrown at any meanies is enough to persuade them to think again about bothering him. However, sometimes salami is just not enough to protect Ronny from harm, so on your travels you can collect extra weapons, such as a PowerSneeze that will totally annihilate anything that moves on the screen. These weapons are stored in your pockets of which you only have four, meaning that you have to be careful about what you pick up, and when: later on you might require some kind of an implement to attract those jewels that are just out of reach...



On his way, Ronny has the option to buy, or even collect if careless bods leave them lying aroung, an assortment of extras like the Stenchalizer, the smell so powerful, it knocks everyone for six...



To get to Scotland Yard, Ronny has to traverse the harshest (!) of terrains, like Fieldington's sewerage system. Orange marks Ronny's way, with red his bus routes. Luckily he's got a map to help him on his way...

It's a fair cop, Guv

Being an errand-boy, people just can't help asking you to do things for them, unaware of your more vital mission. On your travels you will meet various bods with parcels or letters that they'll ask you to deliver for a cash bonus. Unfortunately for you, you have to take their business so that you can earn a bit of money. This is absolutely essential to progress through the game, as at the end of every level poor Ronny's legs are so tired that he has to catch the bus to transport him to the next stage. As Scotland Yard are only going to give him his cash reward at the end of his journey - 9 levels later, keeping a track of finances is of utmost importance. It's no use spending all your money in the shop to complete one level if you can't get on the bus to get to the next one.

The game is very easy to get into. The instant appeal is very high with a jolly soundtrack going on in the background, and beautifully coloured smooth scrolling graphics. It's addictive to play, and the way that the jewels are strewn around the level is such that they aren't all instantly accessible, but with a little thought, all the jewels are obtainable.

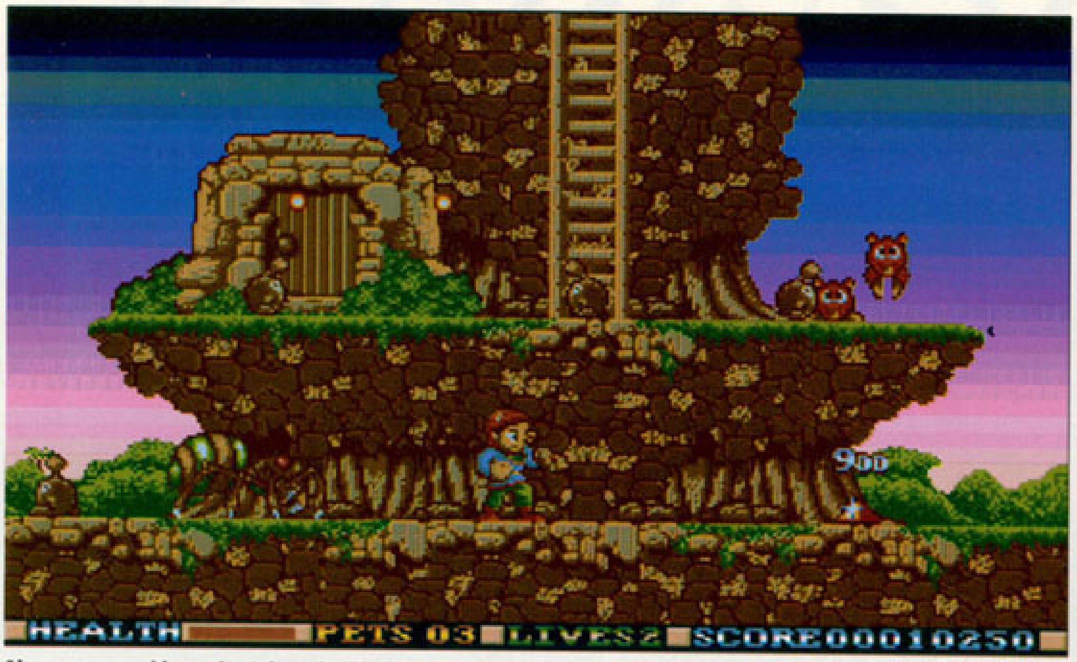
The difficulty level gets progressively harder as you move along through the game, but on the whole it's well balanced so that it doesn't take too long to work out how to get all the bits you need to collect. It's not too hard to play and the game rolls along nicely, allowing you to progess fast enough to stay interested. A good jolly game with instant appeal, that will keep you addicted for a while.

Asam Ahmad

Rolling Ronny
Virgin ■ £24.99

- Excellent graphics, with loads of colour and smooth scrolling.
- Very jolly background soundtrack but few FX.
- Good gameplay, even if not an original format.
- No variation from level to level makes it a bit monotonous.
- Fun, but not compelling enough to grip very long term.

Verdict 76%



Along came a spider and sat down beside him (!). If that arachnid gets any closer the young Elf will have to get nasty. Killing it will earn the pointy eared youngster some bonus points, but he'd better not shoot any cute creatures !



It's level two and the rocket riding blue hedgehogs are coming in force. This is the easy bit though, all monsters and no traps, just you wait till later.



Aghh! It's zombie dawn down in the Crypt. These may look nasty but it's the tricky landscape around here that makes life perilous and distinctly short.

Elf



Elf can fire from ladders easily, with no risk of falling. This good side is balanced by the totally stupid flick screen scroll that can land the woodland lad in real trouble. Cue swings and roundabouts cliche.

Have you got long pointy ears? Do you enjoy an early morning run in the local forest? Elf gives you the chance to exorcise these needs, and by placing you in the boots of Cornelius, an Elf with a mission. He has to save his girlfriend from the clutches of the evil "Necrilous the not very nice" before he boils her in a large bubbling vat of oil.

To accomplish this you first have to negotiate eight levels of platforms and ladders. Naturally (well, for a platform game) life's made more complex by the various nasties, who you have to avoid or shoot. The assorted monsters' only purpose in life is to hinder yours, and they're stunningly good at their job. Touch a nasty and it drains some of your precious energy – ie you die a bit!

Elf service

While busily bashing goblins you're expected to pick up various herbs and animals (or pets as they're known) so that you can trade with the local shop keepers. In the shops that litter Elfland, these pets can be exchanged for various power ups ranging from extra shot speed/power, extra lives, magic spells to very useful flying machine; a must for anyone wanting to aviod trouble and stay 'elfy...

This isn't a run of the mill platform romp though, where you go from one end of the game to the other. Certainly not, you don't get it that easy. In Elf you have to collect objects to help other folk with their problems and in return they will give you items that help solve yours. For example, you have to get a chicken – which just so happens to be conveniently placed on a ledge – for a grand old sage. Being a irritable old cuss he also wants it cooked, so you then have to find the matches and the cooking spit, which isn't easy.

The graphics are drawn in a high gloss cartoon style, with the backgrounds well suited to their respective levels. Overall, Elf is quite a cutie, but not to the Rainbow Islands sickeningly cute extreme. But don't think just because it's got a cartoon-like look, it's going to be easy, it's not! Even though it looks pretty it proves gruesomely tough at times and is more than a match for even hard-core gamers.



These less than edible looking plants are the key to good Elf. Collecting these herbs allows you to trade in shop keepers to buys all manner of useful goodies like flying machines, super shots and extra lives. Most transactions require pets too though, so get collecting!

Sound's familiar

The sound's also good with the option to play with music or spot effects. Go with the effects, it's not because the music is naff, far from it, as it's an excellent firr, it's just that it becomes a bit repetitive. The sound effects are the better option, if only because whenever you kill something it lets off a blood curdling scream, and the shots would sound at home in the middle of a Star Wars movie: very nice indeed.

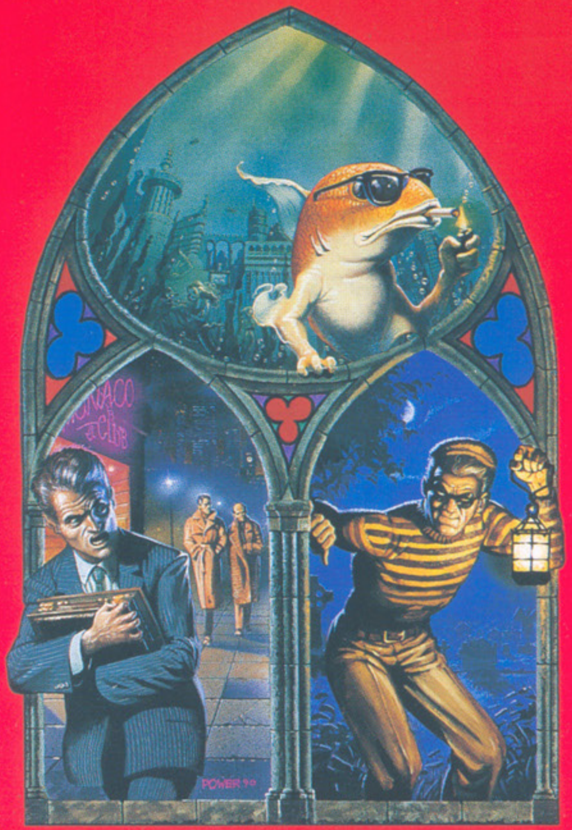
The overiding impression that Elf gives is one of size. The first level alone takes ages to complete but luckily there's a save game option and the end of each section. This adds to Elf's long term appeal. The only gripe about Elf is that the difficulty curve is , very steep, like vertical. It's too hard for those who fancy the occasional arcade blast, but really challenge the die hard platform freaks.

Adrian Price

Elf
Ocean ■ £25.99

- Stunning visuals make Elf look cute, but it's a wolf in elf's clothing.
- Kill soundtrack and go for the effects, they're rather good!
- Eight huge levels and a save game facility give this arcade long term appeal.
- Overly tough pace makes this one for the die-hard platform gamers.

AMIGA Verdict FORMAT **85%**





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Flames of

In the dim, distant future things aren't good for the ex-inhabitants of Midwinter Isle. Just as they thought their trubs were over the Saharan Empire comes along and grabs them by the archipelagos.

The snow and ice have melted, the sun's out and the corrupt Saharan Empire is about to invade your home island. Not only that but your ice cream's dripping onto your shorts and you've got sunburn.

Flames of Freedom takes place many years after John Stark and his team saved the island of Midwinter from, er, some other evil people. Midwinter island itself has sunk beneath the flood caused by the thaw, and its inhabitants now live on the island of Verde, which has been renamed Agora. Got it so far?

The thing is, there are 41 other islands to the east of Agora which are controlled by the aforementioned Saharan Empire, who also control the whole of Africa. This empire has now set its sights on Agora: in approximately six month's time, an armada will set sail from Africa and head towards Agora, via the intervening islands, to raid it.

Understandably though, Agora's inhabitants aren't too pleased about this, so they decide to liberate the slave islands in the hope that their enlightened citizens will repel the Saharans. Well they decide to liberate the islands, but it's you who actually has to do it.

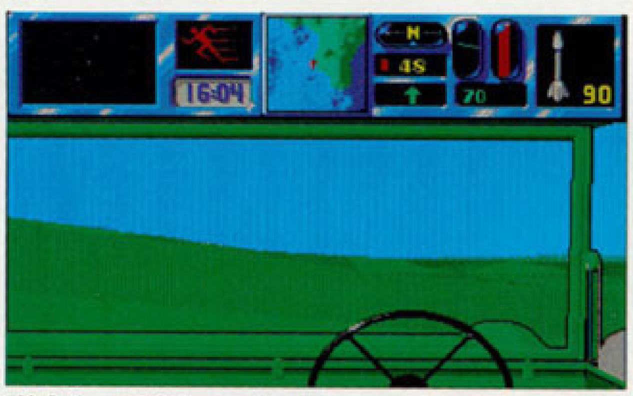


You can travel under the sea provided you have the right transport (a submarine or a crawler). It's quite crowded down there; enemy subs, crawlers and undersea bases are all prime targets for your missiles.

On the Campaign Trail

There are two ways to play *Flames of Freedom*, depending on how involved you want to get. If you want a short game you can play Raid and tackle a single island. In this case, once you win, the game is over and you can go on to try any of the other islands. The only snag is you can't save halfway through, so the island must be completed in one go.

The longer game is the Campaign. This gives you approximately six month's game time to liberate as many islands as possible



This is the sort of view you'll see when travelling through the 3D landscape. The "cockpit" graphics change according to the vehicle you're in – unless you're on foot, when there aren't any.



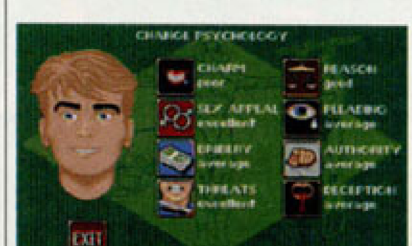
Control is the man behind everything you do. Please him and you're doing well; but be warned, he doesn't treat fools lightly.

Character building

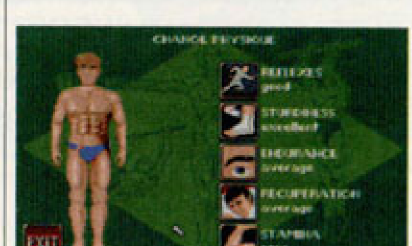


The default agent, Gavin Steel, probably won't be to your liking (though his mum is proud of him). Fortunately you have the chance to build your own agent before beginning a campaign. The characteristics of your agent will affect the way you tackle each mission and also how you interact with other people, so that someone who is very aggressive is more likely to successfully gain information by threatening rather than cajoling, for instance.

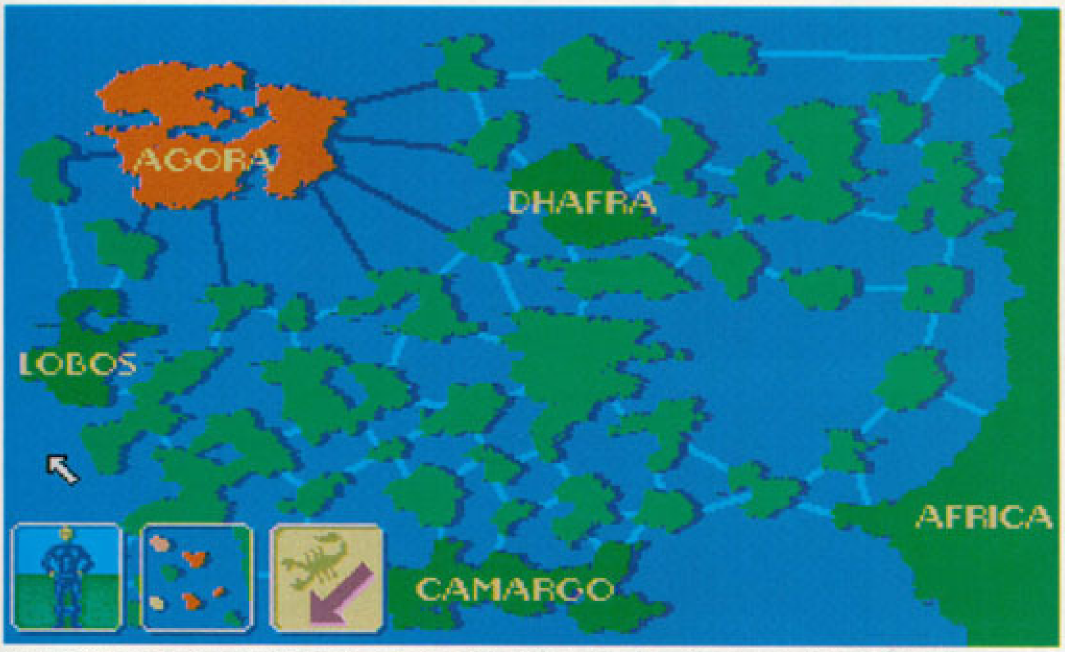
Firstly you have to select which bits of face you want on your dude/dudette. Being non-sexist, non-racist and altogether cool, the game allows you to have female or coloured agents too. This bit is great fun in itself, because you can come up with some really freaky combinations.



Then you set your character's psychology. Each of his/her eight traits – Charm, Sex Appeal, Bribery, Threats, Reason, Pleading, Authority and Deception – are rated from "poor" to "excellent", and altering one will change another: if Pleading is set at Excellent, then Authority will automatically be lowered, and so on.



Finally, you alter your agent's physique. Here there are five different traits (Reflexes, Sturdiness, Endurance, Recuperation and Stamina) and they are interdependent in much the same way as the psychological ones, so altering one of them directly affects another. Fold lightly and simply cook for 20 minutes et voila! One agent.



Agora is the big island marked "Agora". Africa is on the right, and you've got to liberate all the bits in between within a six-month time limit. So what's the problem?

Freedom – Midwinter 2

before the Armada sets sail. Your choice of islands is very important; when the Armada is travelling to Agora, it will try to avoid any liberated island wherever possible, as passing over such an island will seriously damage its military strength. But the longer it takes to reach Agora the weaker it becomes, so if you can force it to take a roundabout route you can significantly reduce its strength. Strength is important when you consider that eventually you will have to single-handedly take on over 60 vehicles and win.

> Strength is important when you consider that you have to win against over 60 vehicles.

In either game your first step is to choose the island you next want to liberate. They each have a skull rating from one to five, five skulls indicating the hardest islands and one the easiest. If you want to see what effect liberating the island will have on the route the Armada takes, an option on the Training screen will show you just that. This simulated route is totally realistic, so liberating those islands in the real game will result in the Armada taking exactly the same route. Naturally, the key islands, ones which must be taken to slow the Armada, have a skull rating of five.

Once you've chosen an island, you're informed of its history, your objectives and the reasons behind them. These objectives fall into one of four categories: to destroy a building or

Continued overleaf

Left at the lights

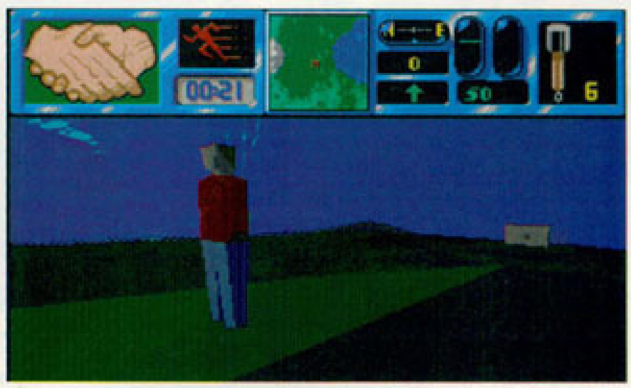


If you had to travel everywhere in real time you'd soon be attacking the enemy with a Zimmer frame rather than a Luger. Fortunately there's a system called Autoroute which lets you set your destination on the main map and travel there automatically.

Plot your route on the map (avoiding the enemy wherever possible) and hit the Quicktime key. Instead of travelling through the 3D environment your progress is charted by the little man who is zooming around the map. If you stray too close to something of interest (like a tank firing shells at your head) you're automatically returned to the 3D world to deal with it.

Autoroute can also be used in the 3D landscape, though of course you only travel at normal speed in that case. If you're feeling particularly confrontational (and you've got a lot of time) you can set a course for the heart of the enemy camps, switch on Autoroute and while away the hours toddling through the landscape. Whenever you come near the enemy, switch off Autoroute and start blasting.

Autoroute is quite intelligent. It allows you to travel through water if you're on foot (because you can swim through it) but in a vehicle you'll be stopped at the water's edge.



When you spot a person (usually next to a building), walk/drive/fly up to them and hit the Special Action key to talk to them



Your headquarters at Agora will give you all you need to get started on your missions. The War Room lets you load or save a campaign and Raids allows you to attack one island.



People you meet won't always help you straight away – you may have to do a little persuading using your charm/authority/large fists. Even then they can refuse permanently.

squadron; to enlist an inhabitant of the island; to assassinate a Saharan stationed on the island; or to seize Saharan documents. You may be given as many as seven of these objectives to fulfil on a single island, depending on its skull rating.

Next you're given all the information that you need to get started. This includes the name of a person who you can initially contact on the island and his/her location, the weapon and vehicle (if any) you start with and any intelligence that may have been gathered so far on the island, such as the position of any enemy squadrons.

The game starts proper with your arrival at the island. Roughly half of your time is spent in a 3D landscape, with the other half spent making decisions and being given information in a series of static screens. The 3D view is similar to that of Midwinter. Everything on the island – vehicles, buildings, missiles and people – is represented by a 3D object, and it's here that all your fire-fights with the enemy take place. When something important happens – you talk to someone, for instance, or you destroy an enemy unit – you leave the landscape and are shown an appropriate graphic. On these screens, actions and decisions are made by clicking on icons.

When you meet someone, they may offer you various forms of help. (Of course, you may have to persuade them first by threatening, cajoling and so on, or even carrying out certain jobs for them.) This help may be to supply you with another weapon or vehicle, to give you the location of another contact, to offer to sabotage a building, to patch you up with First Aid, to shelter you from the enemy or to give you other important knowledge.

People are the key to achieving your objectives; only through them will you be able to find your targets. Sometimes you need to contact ten or more people, each one giving you the location of the next, before you find the person or building you're looking for.

With luck, you eventually succeed in liberating the island. You're then showered with gifts by the grateful islanders and given an extremely handy secret weapon for use on subsequent missions. Then it's onto the next island – at least, until the armada sets sail.

Help! I'm being impressed!

Flames of Freedom is one huge game; the amount of information you have to digest before you can play is daunting. Once you're familiar with its foibles, though, you discover a game packed with detail. The sheer size of the playing area and the amount of things to do means you'll be kept busy for a long time. Strangely, though, the 3D graphics don't seem to have progressed very far from those of *Midwinter*. Most of the vehicles look the part and the fractal waves on the sea are impressive, but there's a lack of detail in the landscape which mars the impression of reality. The real bugbear is that everything is displayed so slowly; when one or more objects are on the screen, they all jerk about in slow bursts and look most unrealistic.

This sluggishness permeates the whole game. Every time something noteworthy happens in the 3D environment (you talk to someone, for instance) the game pauses, puts up a small graphic pertaining to your action, loads in the data, decompresses it and finally gets around to displaying whatever it is the game wanted. These pauses for disk accessing and decompressing are major design failures and almost ruin the flow of the game, sometimes lasting for five to ten seconds. A hard disk installation option would eliminate the problem at a stroke, but this is absent.

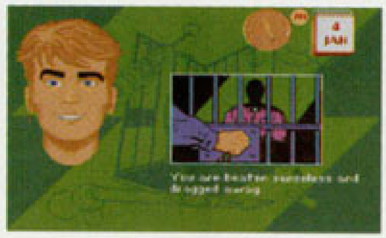
All the other non-3D screens are excellently drawn and full of detail, giving the game a polished look. Sound is limited to some fairly effective spot effects such as birds tweeting, the growl of your engine and the swishing of the sea, and a theme that runs through the non-action sections.

If you can stand the interminable disk accessing there's a huge and challenging game waiting in *Flames of Freedom*; one which with a few tweaks would be worthy of a Format Gold. More impatient souls are advised to think twice.

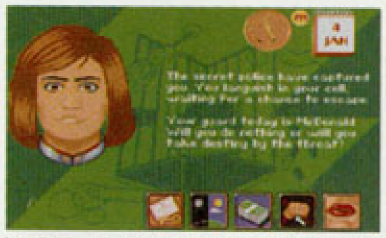
Ed Ricketts

Trust me – I know what I'm doing

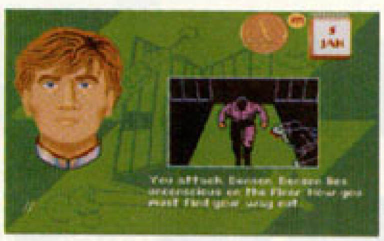
Most of the people who agree to help you are reliable. Unfortunately, though, sometimes you stumble upon a traitor who betrays you to the secret police.



That nice gentleman who was so helpful on the phone only turned out to be a blummin' spy and now you're being whisked off by the secret police to a dark, dank cell somewhere in the deepest bowels of Croydon.



Once inside you've four choices: to bribe/attack/seduce the guard, or sit around and do nothing. Each day a different guard is on duty and they all have their own weaknesses. If you know the guard's really an old sweetie (and he/she is the opposite sex to you) you could try to seduce him/her. If you want to play safe you can do nothing and wait until a more familiar guard arrives the next day, but time's a-wasting meanwhile. Let's go for the attack...



It worked! A chop to the gut and you're out. If it had all gone horribly wrong you would have been overpowered, beaten up (increasing your injuries) and thrown back in the cell. But justice prevailed and now you're free!



On arrival at the island you're given the name of one contact and possibly a vehicle. From then on it's up to you to find other contacts, pump them for information, destroy enemy units and fulfil your objectives. Along the way you can hijack enemy units and use them to get around and find new weapons.



During a mission you can call up the map to see all you know about the island. Enemy squadrons, contacts, available vehicles/weapons and towns/buildings can all be displayed.



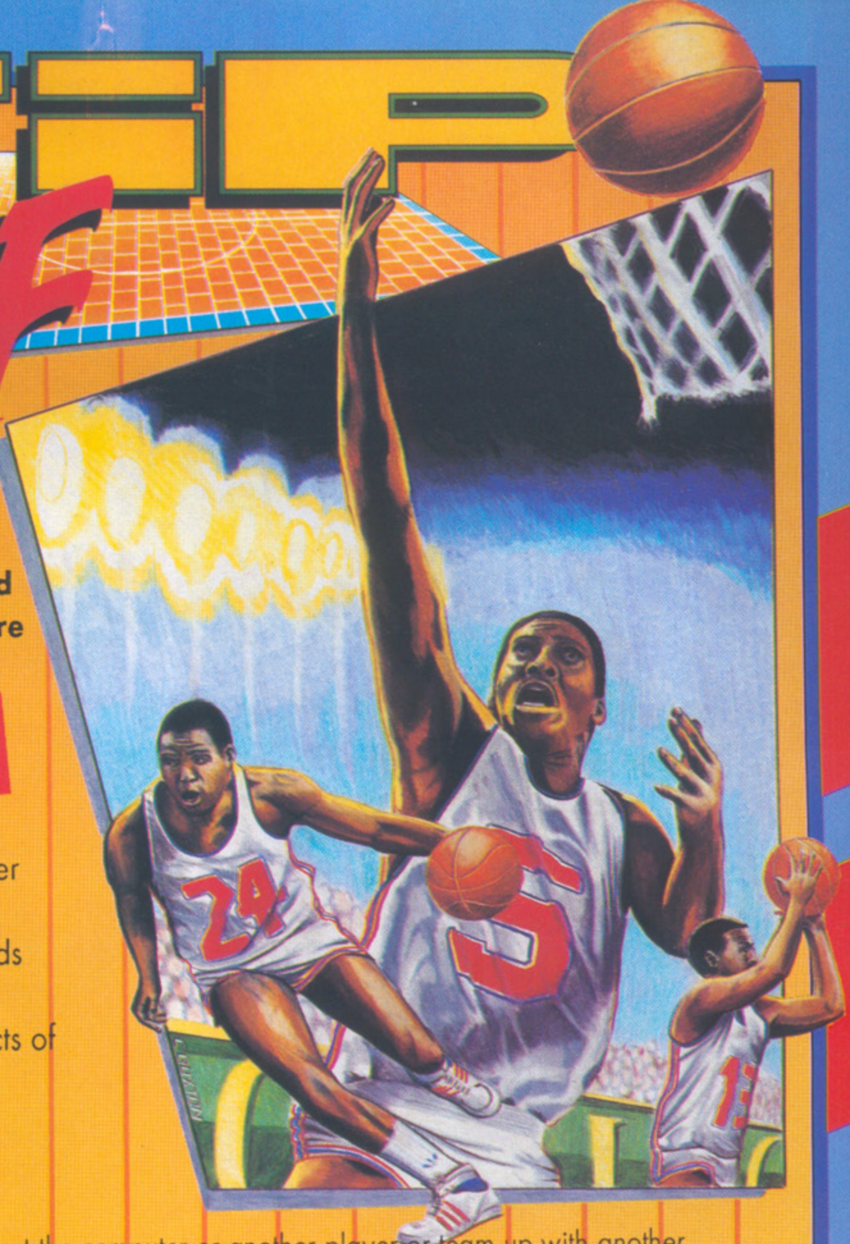
You can never actually die in Flames of Freedom. Instead, if your energy hits rock bottom (shown on the health screen as running men), you black out and have to rest.

Midwinter 2
Rainbird ■ £34.99

- Lengthy bouts of disk accessing are frustrating and ruin the atmosphere.
- Huge playing area, hundreds of characters and lots of variety mean there's a lot to do.
- 3D display is sluggish, making your character hard to control.
- Raid and Campaign options suit both shoot-em-up and strategy buffs.
- The long familiarisation period may put some people off.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **87%**

TIP OFF



The sheer pace of the game, end to end action and tactical game play is the core of TIP OFF, a basketball simulation -

A SIMULATION WHICH IS GREAT FUN TO PLAY

Players' skills, attributes and fitness together with the astute substitution of players and change of tactics banks by the coach, holds the key to success in basket ball. TIP OFF, therefore includes some managerial aspects of the game. The main features are:-

* Multi directional scrolling screen
* Five skill levels. Skill level of both teams can be set independently.
* 1 to 4 players option. Option to play against the computer or another player or team up with another player against the computer or another player or two players.
* Facility to practice skills and tactics.
* Facility to create a team at all skill levels and design tactics.
* Instinctive Joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot or do a dummy. There are two running speeds, two types of dribbling and passing and five types of shots at the basket (Jump shot, Hook shot, Skyhook, Running Jump shot and Slam Dunk).
* Each player on the court is an individual with a unique mixture of attributes (Age, Height, Flair, Pace, Stamina and Composure) and skills (Passing, Dribbling, Stealing, Shooting and Jumping).
* Two types of Leagues. Action Replay at 3 speeds.
* Extra moves are available using two independent button joysticks using the EXORLENCE System.

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Amiga Screenshot's Shown

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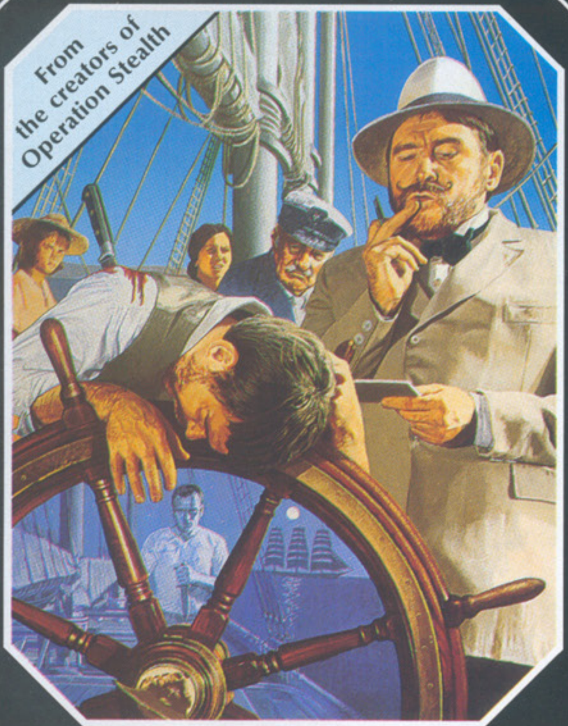
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GOLD – THE MAR

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Screen shot from CBM Amiga

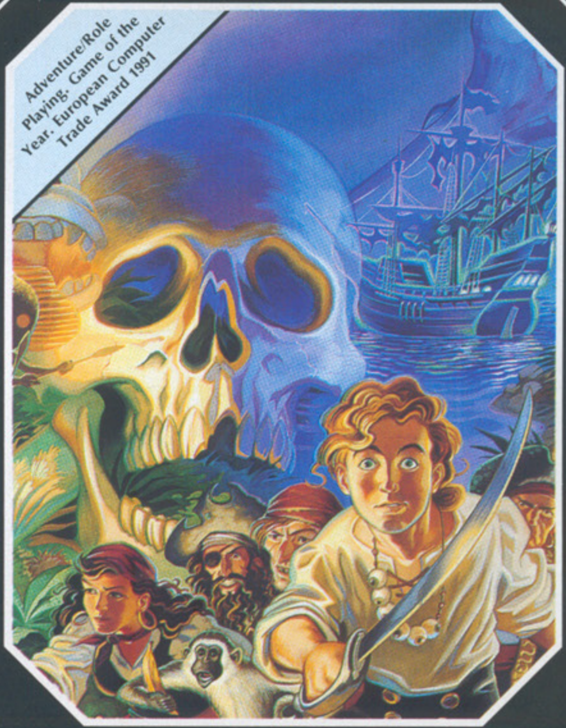


Based in the 1920's, Inspector Raoul Dussentier is aboard a ship in the Mediterranean. But no sooner has the cruise begun when Raoul is summoned to investigate a crime – the murder of his host Niklos Karaboudjan, the Greek shipping magnate. It's up to Raoul to throw some light on this sinister mystery!

- *Wide range of actions, including the option to question other characters in true Agatha Christie style.*
- *PC version features 256 colours, Ad Lib & Roland sonic support.*
- *Amiga version features 32 colours.*

ATARI ST, AMIGA & PC (CGA, EGA, VGA, TANDY AD-LIB & ROLAND).

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND™



Screen shot from PC



A comedy set during the "golden age" of piracy in the Caribbean. The game's twisty plot leads our hero, fresh from the old world, on an hilarious, complex, swash-buckling search for the fabled Secret of Monkey Island.

- *Features dazzling 3D graphics, an original reggae sound track and a point 'n' click no-typing interface.*
- *A wide variety of original entertaining puzzles, unravel hidden meanings in hilarious repartee.*
- *Proportionally scaled animated characters and cinematic pans and camera angles.*

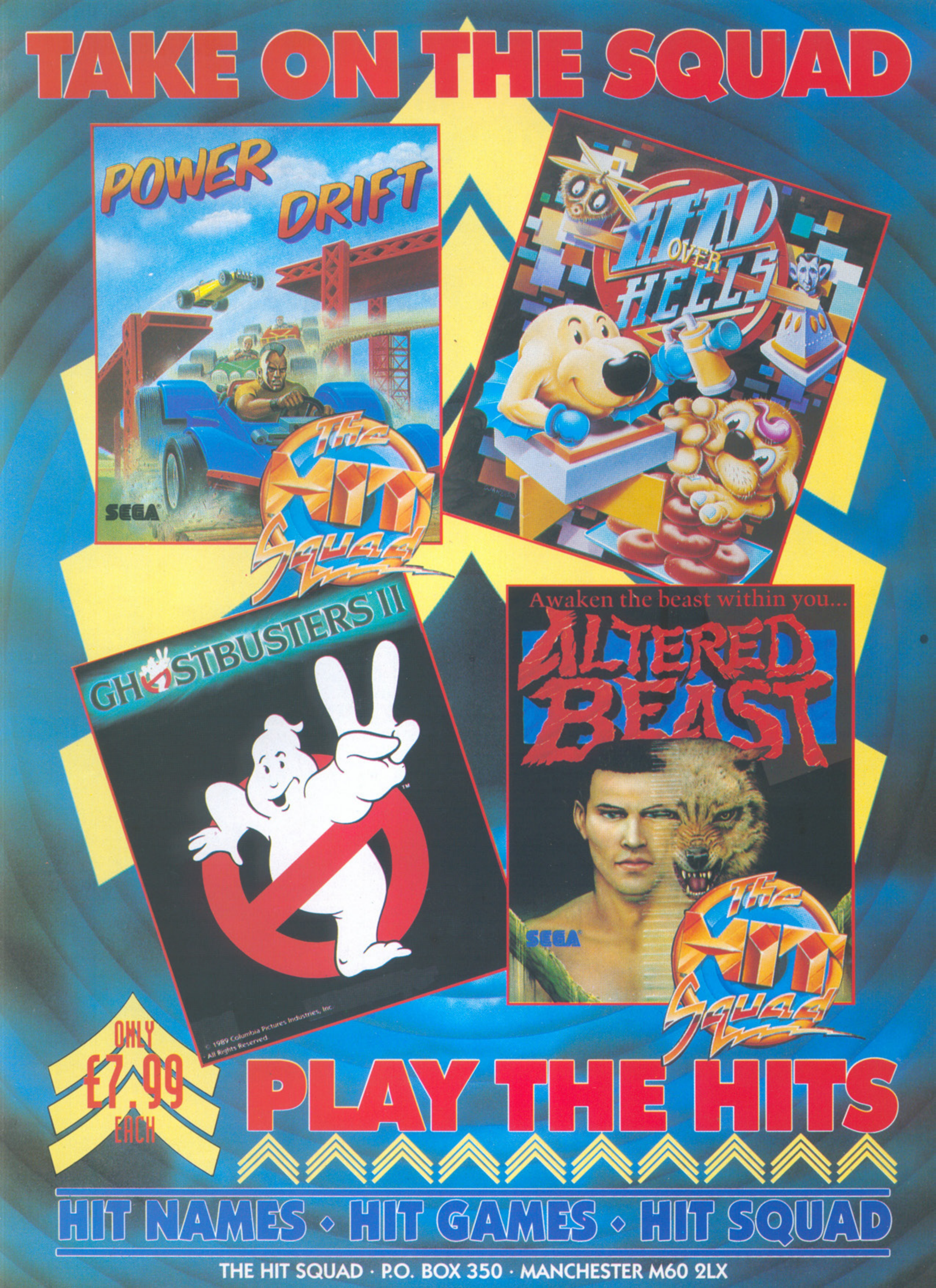
ATARI ST, AMIGA & PC (EGA, CGA, VGA, MCGA, AD-LIB and SOUND BLASTER).

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Round One and it's Kato vs the Executioner. Our boys the one in the red strides and he's doing well against this Pitfighting loser. It's possible to pick up both foes and weapons, both with destructive results. Slap them down then jump on their head. What would the Marquess of Queensberry say?

Pitfighter

A simple round-by-round bloodbath. Here we have a cash crop beat-em-up where the guy who still has his limbs intact at the end wins. Victory earns the fighter a forklift load of cash and the chance to crack heads with another, higher-ranked, foe. At the end of the line lives a pleasant little chap called the Ultimate Warrior, the reigning pit-fighting champ who'd like to introduce his boot to your liver.

Fighting in the pit is a joystick-intensive experience, guaranteed to wrench the wrist. Replacing the coin-ops three fire-button system, the conversion uses joystick position to determine just how you'll inflict ABH. The rapid switching of direction and the waggling accuracy it demands, puts the pressure on. Randomly throwing the stick and pressing the fire won't work: you need to choose that next shot and make it count. The other guys will.



Ladies' night is a far tougher proposition. This lady (Miss Ogîny) is swift to put the boot in, but is a sucker for a punch to the face.



Is this stool taken? No well then I'll wrap it around your skull then. CC Rider is the token biker tough guy. It's about here that the game changes from being a sap into a fast and deadly foe.

Orienteering

Once you've become orientated to the combat system and throwing a combo punch is second nature, you're ready to fight for the pitfighter crown. The first few opponents are easily beaten, but by about Round Five the game's changed its mind about being lenient and really starts to kick heads.

The timing has to be perfect for each and every strike. Punches thrown in vain only allow the other fighter to step in and start on a sequence of blows. Once caught close in, your man has little chance of escape, and only the most frenzied button pusher stands a chance of putting out some reciprocal damage.

Pitfighting it seems defies physics. Often blows don't actually have to land on the opponents to cause any damage, near enough will do. Little spurts of blood and sweat can be seen flying, even when kicks have most obviously missed. The downside of this effect comes when you try to collect the weapons or power pills that are scattered across the floor of the arena. Accurate positioning is essential for collection, but as the foes are constantly in hot pursuit you rarely get a second chance at grabbing that barrel/knife etc, and once is rarely enough.



Choose your meat-head, the bit in the game where you choose which fool is going to toe the line for you, take all the punches, the kicks...

Boot camp

Fighting foibles aside the mock, almost camp, violence is fun. There's none of this waiting for floored folk to stand up again, you can whack them on the floor. All manner of furniture can be picked up and thrown in the face of adversaries, smashing it at them. It's comic book, knockabout stuff, and real amusing if you turn the brain off. Two-player aggression is best, as ever. Will you help or hinder your associate? Should you team up to reach Ultimate Warrior and then sort out who's boss? Or is it every psycho for themselves?

Pitfighter's toughest opponent, though, is its coin-op parent. The arcade features huge digitised sprites, which the Amiga does its level best to mimic. The coin-ops stars couldn't be described as fluid movers, but their computer brethren jerk far more. The sheer screen size of the arcade gives it a display advantage, but the Amiga has to shrink the whole show down somewhat. The reduction in size, killing substantial amounts of the coin-op's 'wow factor'.

Ultimate worrier?

Domark's variant follows the coin-op rigidly in terms of structure and implementation. But they've copied some of the weaker elements too. The inter-match sample of the Ultimate Warrior coming on tough just isn't up to scratch – a word that describes it perfectly. You can't hear the quality in the arcade, but at home you can, and it grates.

Carry on in the car park, is an apt description of *Pitfighter*. It's silly and violent, especially in two-player mode. The technical problems involved in getting such memory hungry beast onto the Amiga and the limitations of a original design do restrict the game's chances. It's light entertainment, not a long stayer, but an amusing diversion for those of an aggressive bent. There is nothing here that adds anything to the beat-em-up genre, it puts up a brave fight but is eventually overwhelmed by the need to copy its coin-op, custom chipped, parent.

Trenton Webb

Pitfighter
Domark ■ £25.99

- A brave conversion that almost comes off.
- Graphics initially look dire but closer inspection reveals attention to detail.
- Becomes uncontrollable at times.
- Two-player simultaneous play shows the game at its best.
- Fun, but no classic, *Pitfighter's* one for the curious only.

Amiga Format Verdict 60%

Megatraveller promised to bring state-of-the-art space role-playing to the Amiga, but it couldn't deliver. Here we have a similar futuristic set-up: a weaving story of mercenaries and conspiracies, which you have to explore and survive. Unfortunately, like *MegaTraveller*, this fails to deliver.

The future has been messed up real bad. The colonisation of the outer planets was controlled by the free market. A market where hired killers were in short supply but in big demand. All manner of anarchy broke out as the furthest reaches of man's empire became hostile battle grounds, where only the profit margin of your paymaster mattered.



A day trip in the Hard Nova hovercar. Controlled by the mouse or keypad you simply rotate it so that it faces the right way and then put some speed on. It's simple, that is until you have to go over an obstacle, when there's the elevation problem. Telling exactly how high you are from the floor is a tad tricky, but crashes are rather costly.

Hard Nova

The good

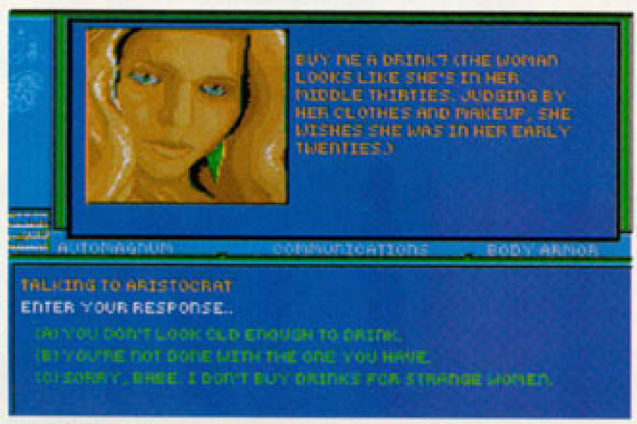
You're a mercenary with a ship, a side-kick and no crew. Using nouse and debating skills you must first find recruits, then find a mission. The mission could be anything from smuggling to exploring, but if you're to pay the rent you'd better do something. Four different star systems await, as do adventures on foot, in your hovercar and in deep space.

As the active participant in the whole show, you're not given a single linear path to follow, but left to your own ends to discover the game's secrets. Controlling the main character – the captain of a smallish space fighter – you must decide whether shooting or asking questions comes first.

Played through windows with icons or keyboard short cuts, you are shown and told about the worlds you encounter. *Hard Nova* comes in three flavours: space, land travel and footwork. All three areas will have to be utilised if you are to become one of outer space's less moral – but wealthier – folk.

All possible actions are controlled by the mouse and adhere to the same proximity principal. When something is visible in the display window it can be targeted, when targeted it and either shot, talked or moved to.

In space mode the aim is to negotiate your way to the Stargates – sort of hyper-space M25s – then to the system and planet of your choice. Once you're there, the hovercar comes into play, as it is used for all trans-planetary travel. Once you've reached the chosen location on a planet then you, and your boys/girls/alien things of indeterminate gender, can get busy and start some close-up investigative/destructive/illegal work. The three stages provide a zoom facility, with the scope to cover many different star systems in real detail. With communications and surprise attacks possible on every level the deliberate elements of plot are spiced up with random, and often deadly, encounters.



One of your first encounters is with this psychic lady who politely tells of your imminent death. Never ever take crystals from odd folk in bars, it is always depressing.



Wandering around starbase is a disenchanting experience. Seen from above it looks awful and is tricky to control.

The ugly

The parallels between *Hard Nova* and *MegaTraveller* are not restricted to plot, they share some annoying graphical problems too. When you wander around a building or planet surface, all you ever see is a head's down view of tiny people on a map. While efficient, this is hardly atmospheric. Life gets a little easier when you shoot or talk to another person as a static picture appears. But these pics aren't that great and they lack animation, so they do little to redress the imagination deficit. Pastel shades dominate the colour scheme, but fit the genre badly, being far more reminiscent of a trip to Laura Ashley's than the outer spiral arm of the galaxy.

The display, constructed of clear and easily-learned icons should make the game a swift player, but once again the visual side of the game mars the show. The icons themselves are obvious, but the sprites that show your team – either racing around a planet in the hovercar or hurtling through deep space – are pitifully small and painfully hard to control. This robs the game of its action element because you have to move pedantically in order to avoid error.

The bad

Hard Nova the idea sounds fine, yomp across the stars seeking a few thrills and the occasional fire fight. *Hard Nova* the reality is sadly different. The graphics present the major problem, shattering illusions of far flung worlds rather than fostering them. If you find these problems of sprite size and control tolerable, then the many plots layered throughout the planets of the four systems would provide enough intrigue to keep you locked in. It would prove hard though to ignore the interface through which these strange new worlds can be explored.

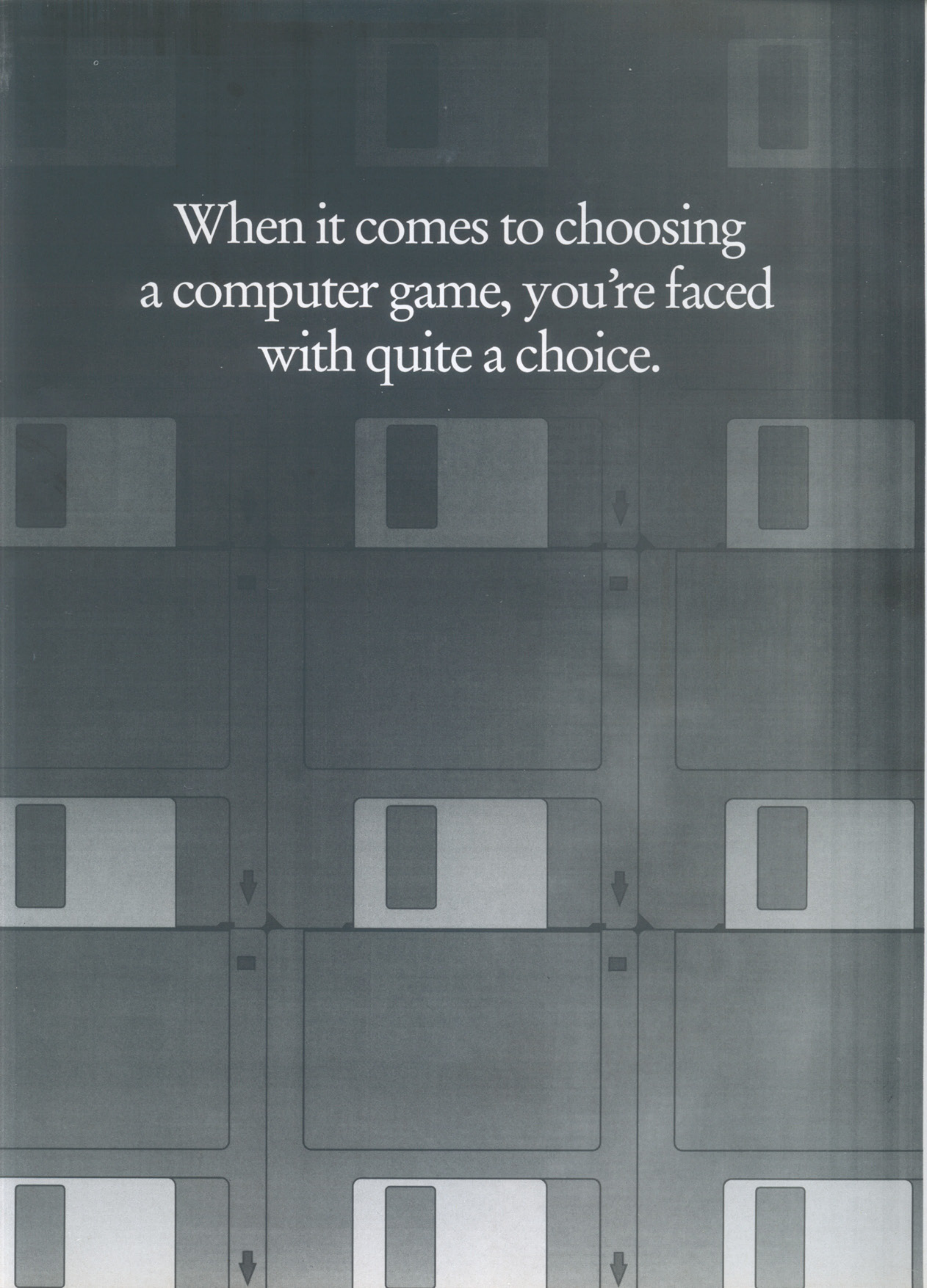
Hard Nova provides the flexibility that *MegaTraveller* needed, but graphically it fares far worse. Here both atmosphere and action are impeded. *Hard Nova* could have a been a hard-core space tale, if another graphic system had been used; but as it stands all the good design in the galaxy, all the plot twists in the universe, can't balance the scales.

Trenton Webb

Hard Nova
Electronic Arts ■ £25.99

- Tiny sprites and pastel palette ruin the atmosphere.
- Good multi-layered plot that would be fun to unravel.
- Not unplayable, just unexciting, *Hard Nova* offers no hook.
- There are three levels of play: space, vehicle and on foot.
- Travel to strange new worlds and be totally disillusioned.

AMIGA Verdict AMIGA FORMAT **42%**


When it comes to choosing a computer game, you're faced with quite a choice.

Stratego

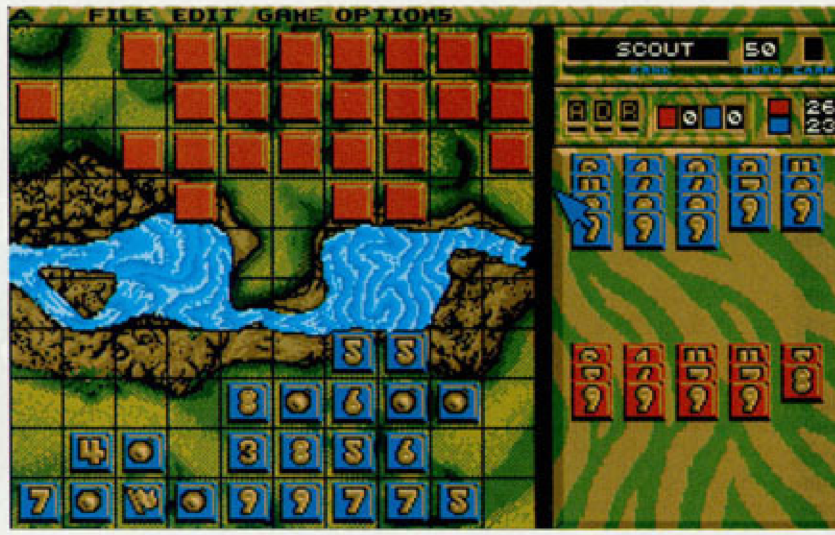
Back in the dim and distant past that they're calling the early 1980s, strategy board-games abounded. Most of these involved two players commanding armies which waged war on each other; the winning army was the one whose commander had the greater tactical ability. Now Accolade has ported one of those games – *Stratego* – across to the Amiga.

Grimy graphics

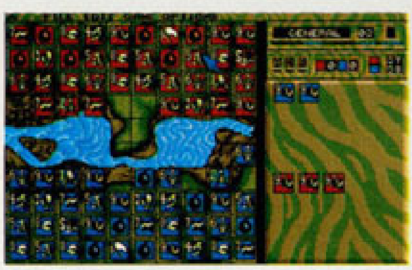
The actual concept behind the game is quite simple – which is a good job, since the manual isn't exactly overly detailed on gameplay, while the on-screen help is displayed in such a dreadful font that reading it is a real pain. You could, of course, select the 'demo game' option to see how things work.

You play by moving your pieces around the board, trying to find and capture the other army's flag. If you land on a square occupied by your opponent then the highest-ranking piece wins, and the other is removed. If both pieces are of the same rank then they are both removed. The twist is that you can't see the rank of your opponent's piece until you actually land on the square.

Playing well takes time, real time. At first attacks take the form of a shot in the dark, well lets see what happens if ... soon after a few quick defeats it becomes apparent that there's a little more to successful strategy than guesswork. *Stratego* stresses good memory work, but by you, not the machine. Because each piece only reveals itself when attacking you have to remember what's where. This is particularly important as the more specialised units (your flag and mines) can't move and guessing their location obviously makes life easier.



The trick with Stratego is knowing which of your opponents' pieces are where. One way to tell is by looking at the losses panel. The only other way to tell is to watch each and every combat. The problem here is remembering exactly which brown tile did what and what value they were. "Well I think it was north of the river..."



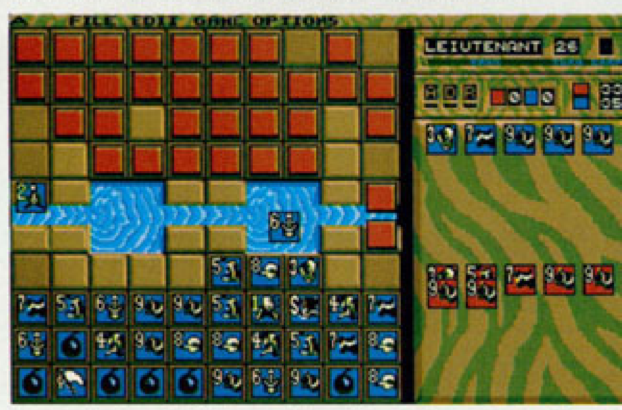
Kick off for world war three and Blue moves into an early lead. It won't last long as Stratego's opponents are real good.

The game's graphics leave a little to be desired: there is a choice of two different piece designs, but only one of them is really useable – the other has images on the pieces which are totally indecipherable. In the centre of the board is a picture of a lake, with pretty running water. Pretty, that is, until you've played the game for ten minutes or so, at which time it stops being pretty and becomes dull. This traditional set up can be traded though for two more modern boards that simplify the layout. The pieces too can be changed to from the twee little pics of soldiers to numbers, if minimalism's your thing.

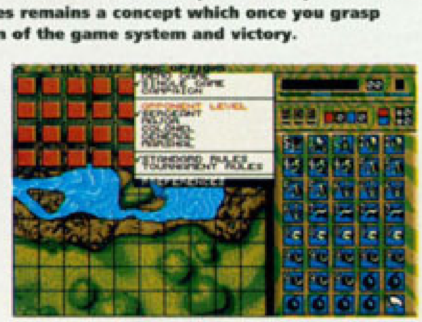
Irritatingly a spinning disk replaces the cursor while the computer is considering its move, but it's frozen in one place – regardless of how hard you bash the mouse about. When you've accessed a menu the cursor becomes extremely jerky and it become's rather tricky to select the first item in any menu. Not everything is bad news though, the game offers five levels of computer 'intelligence' and the higher ones even manage to give you a very challenging game.



The board can be altered to personal taste. This is the modern board and it may look different but the game remains the same.



Yet another board, this time with traditional pieces. The problem of moving around the lakes remains a concept which once you grasp allows true exploitation of the game system and victory.



Among the options menu is buried a whole bunch of options which make the learning curve easier. The best of these are the classic Stratgeo opening set ups which offer a wide range of playing styles.

Cardboard rules, OK

There are a number of standard set ups available within the game so that you don't have to place all your pieces individually at the start of each game. These setups are also worth studying for strategy tips – how best to protect your flag with mines and so on. And if you get confused halfway through a game you can save it to disk and carry on at some later date.

Overall, *Stratego* is one for the strategic board games nut. It can't hope to be better than the original, simply because it's better to whup a human army than a computer one. It is though a game of risk, daring and very solid planning. The graphics aren't particularly inspired and the menus can prove tricky to use. The core of the game remains the same and some of the strategic twists it throws are sweet, if costly to your side.

Ian Wrigley

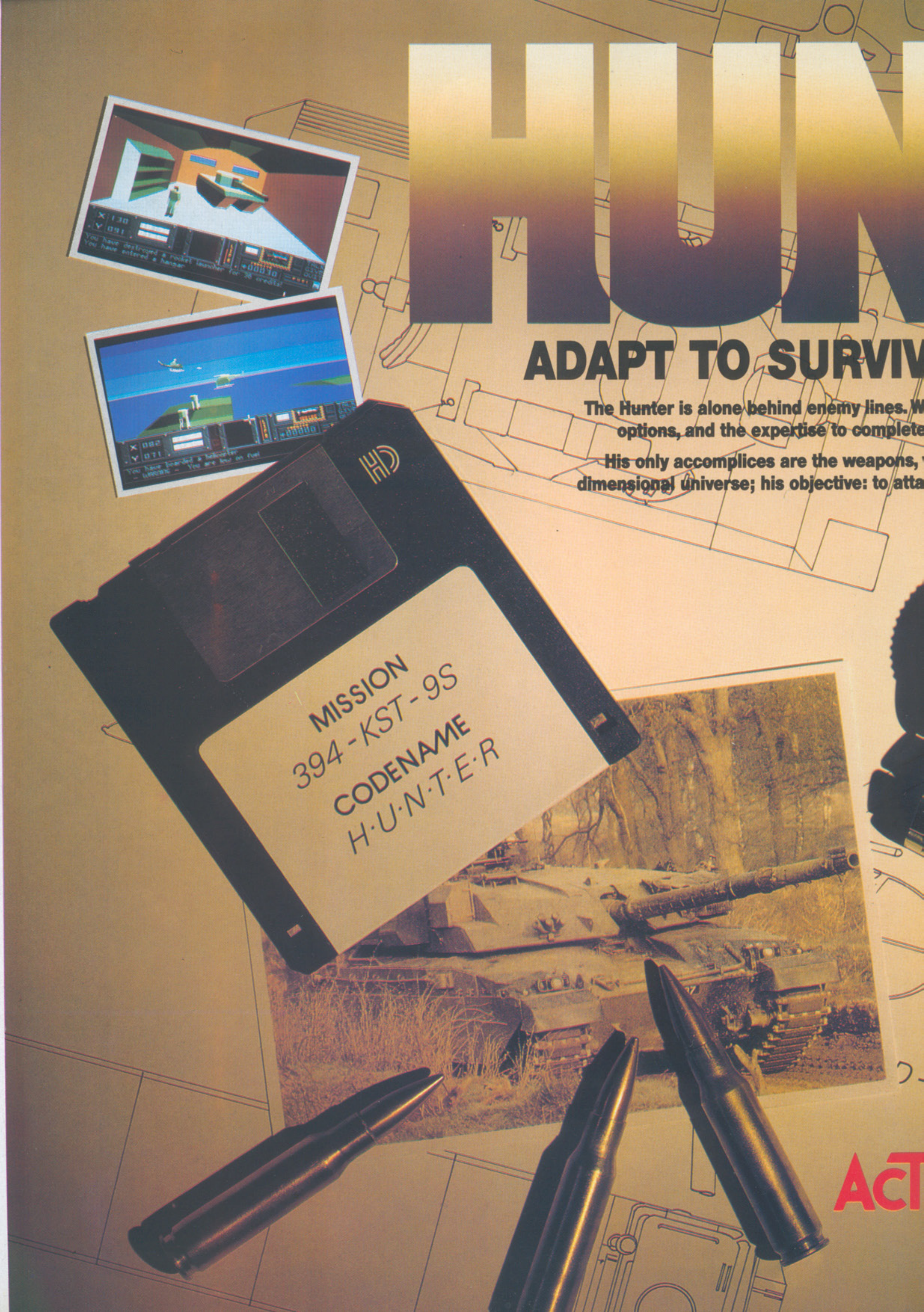
Stratego
Accolade ■ £25.99

- Faithful to the original board-game, ideal for solo players.
- The computer is a strong opponent at the higher levels.
- Poor graphics and an almost unreadable text font.
- Slow but ruthless, one for grey matter not the reactions.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **81%**



When it comes to choosing a computer game that's intelligent, original and above all fun.
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satility to make best use of a wide range of
s missions, the Hunter is a breed apart.
d structures found in his amazing three-
vive. The Hunter has the will to win. Do you?
SION
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Final Fight

Big, arcade-style sprites often make a bigger splash. Is size all important though? Or is it what you do with them that matters?

Beat-em-ups are a curious breed. Their intensive joystick action ensures you can't play for hours, while their violent theme is often cited as computer gaming's most deplorable aspect; yet still they keep on coming. *Final Fight* is a cracking conversion of the Capcom coin-op but is that enough?

The thick plotens

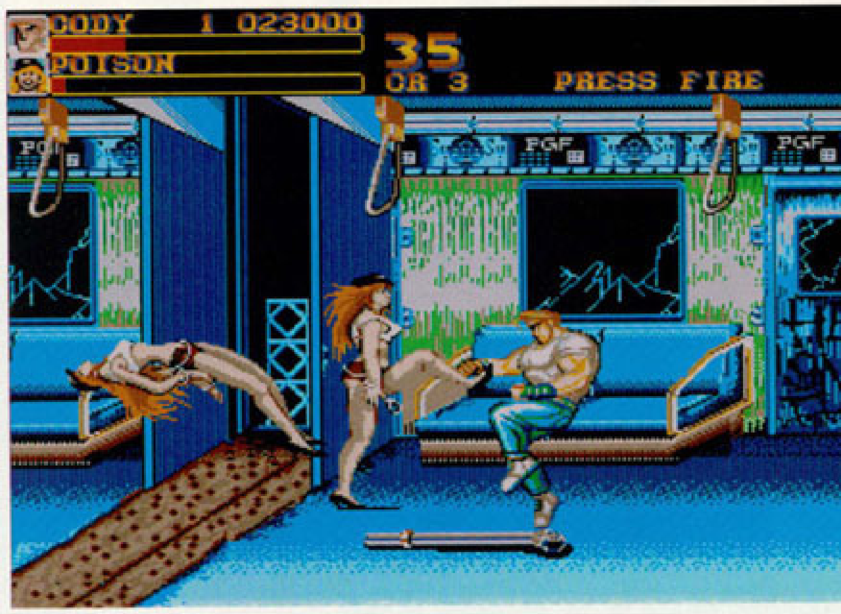
Guess what, the world's gone down the tubes again. Thugs and hoodlums rule the streets, but there are three warriors whose martial skill can set society back on the straight and narrow. You and another player can do some serious butt kicking in big sprite style.

If first impressions are anything to go by, then *Final Fight* scores. The sprites are huge and move with a speed which promises major league action. As one of three fighters, you're equipped with the fighting moves with which to clear the scum from the streets. Each battler gets a kick, punch and special move to do down the enemies of law and order.

The fights follow predictable patterns, as you stroll from left to right the first foes to show out are the level's losers: who are easily whipped into shape, providing a quick trainer in how to use the moves and street furniture (weapons). After a few layers of losers you go heads up with that level's boss. These guys aren't dangerous, but they are tough, and a solid series of sequential hits are needed here.

After each level you're transported to another location but annoyingly en route your

Down in the tube station at Midnight, Cody meets some very strange young ladies. They're just the kind of girls Mother used to warn him about. Luckily using his wit charm and size twelve Nikes he manages to soldier through his honour intact. Luckily he has brought along his lucky charm – a large piece of metal – to reassure him through these troubled times.





To add a customised look to your motor take one large piece of scaffolding and one new Sierra (above). Liberally apply lashings of piping and you soon have the car to match those 'trendy' distressed jeans look (below). More automotive fashion tips next month. Actually smashing the car's a sub game, where damage means points.

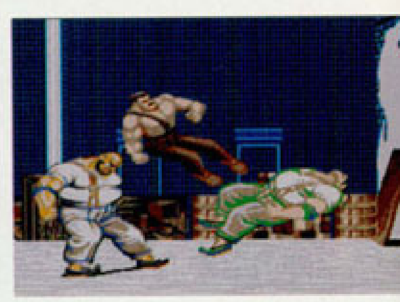




Ladies and gentlemen, tonight's main attraction is a totally mismatched contest between a mad Kendo warrior and Guy, all-round good, well, guy! Kick him repeatedly and that's it.



Cody squares up to another scuz ball. "Didn't I kill you three carriages back?"



Only Haggar can stop these fat boys in full charge, Cody and Guy just get dropped.



Haggar has similar problems with public transport. Always less subtle than Cody he goes straight for the kill. Using his special fighting technique he grabs hold of his foe and drops him on his head. This is dead (literally) effective against the lightweight opposition, but the big bad guys can't be picked up.

man's managed to lose any weapons he had before and each section has to be beaten within a set time. The limit's generous, but it pays not to hang around searching for dropped knives or drain pipes, because this fight's a long one and losing a credit for any reason means you ain't going to see the end.

It takes no time at all to get to grips with the joystick moves because they are limited and logical. Without fire pressed, up makes you jump and left or right forces a walk. With fire pressed and the stick centred the battler punches, with the stick pressed left or right he kicks, while down starts off the special move.

In the arcade it was the special moves that made the machine worth playing. Two of the three heroes go into a pirouetting sweep kick, flooring all opposition. While the slower Haggar (who used to be Streetfighter) lovingly hugs foes, turns them upside down, jumps in the air and smashes their head on the pavement. Silly but spectacular.

Each fighter has their own energy bar and while they're actually bashing the opponents their's is displayed too, revealing how close to death both are. Both parties have generous amounts of life energy which doesn't help the action as there is little threat. It simply makes the stand up slugging matches slow affairs.

Animated aggression

The animation of sprites stresses speed before smoothness. Making them attack causes a swift shift of frame from their rest position straight into the attack, which while you're playing just looks fast. Watch over another player's shoulder and it begins to appear like a crazed flick book. For the purposes of the game though the system works and keeps the pace high: essential for arcade style action .

The background illustration, though, doesn't equip itself nearly as well, failing to be convincing, even when your attention is focused on the fight. Monotone is the overriding message, with simple sketches of objects and onlookers providing the backdrops.

> Sprites are huge and move with a speed which promises major league action.

Final Fight is enjoyable to a point, that point being where you realise that nothing new is going to happen. It smacks of formula with the same style of attack following time after time. Each major villain has to be beaten using a specific technique, but as you have relatively few moves the experimentation quotient is low. Without this the bad guys lose the fear factor that all guardians need if they are to lift arcades to classic status.

The limitations of the the arcade's overall design combined with the limits of the beat-em-up genre force *Final Fight* into a gameplay corner. It's one from which it cannot escape, because it does not break enough rules. Graphically the sprites are large and move fast, but this is at the expense of smoothness. The heroes seem to skate along when scrolling and the backgrounds are unconvincing at best.

A strong conversion of an average punch out arcade. Because of the coin-op's play problems the effort put into the conversion side is frittered away. It's one of the best conversions of a Capcom arcade for a long, long while but accurate copying of large sprites – the arcade's major puller – can't make for long-term computer entertainment.

Trenton Webb



Level one's just begun and already the nasties are coming in their droves. To pick up and use the large pipe, just stand over it and press fire. Then press fire again to belt the street slime.



Guy – Neat pyjamas and a solid side kick to boot.



Cody – Jumping spin kicks are his main strength.



Haggar – likes to bash folks skulls on the sidewalk.



Being an end-of-level bad guy means never worrying about colour coordination!



The knife is one of the more duff weapons, but when it's thrown they get the point.

Final Fight
US Gold ■ £25.99

- Huge sprites that move real fast.
- Well presented with storybook intro.
- The animation flicks rather than flows, for the sake of speed.
- A poor arcade that's been well copied.
- Too little variety to make the big time.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 60%





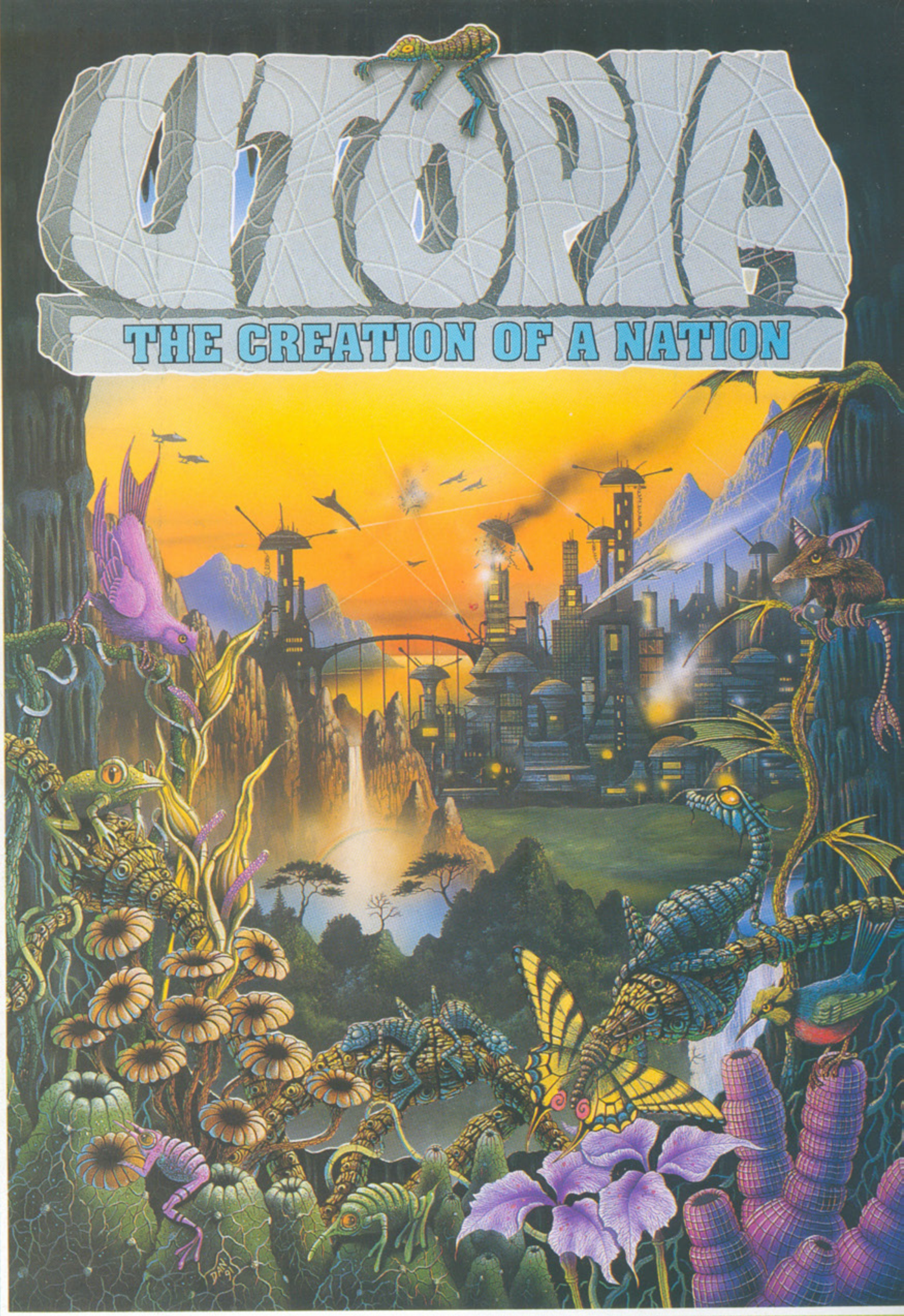








Screen shots from various formats.



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SUPER STAR — "The best game Gremlin has ever released." **94%**

THE ONE — "A cross between Sim City & Populous." **93%**

GAMES-X GAME OF THE WEEK — "Utopia is an excellent game."

AMIGA COMPUTING GAMER GOLD — **93%** "The next Generation in Godgames"

ACE TrailBlazer — Ace Rated **920**

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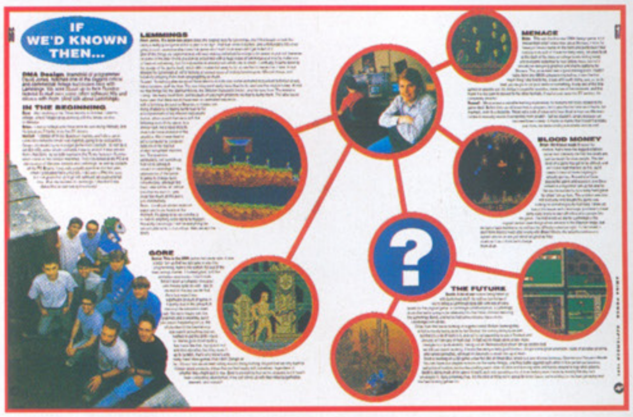
AMIGA POWER

MORE REVIEWS

AMIGA POWER devotes more space to more game reviews than any other magazine! Every month we review well over 40 new full price, budget and PD releases – many in massive three (or even four) page reviews like this one! What we don't tell you about a game isn't worth knowing.

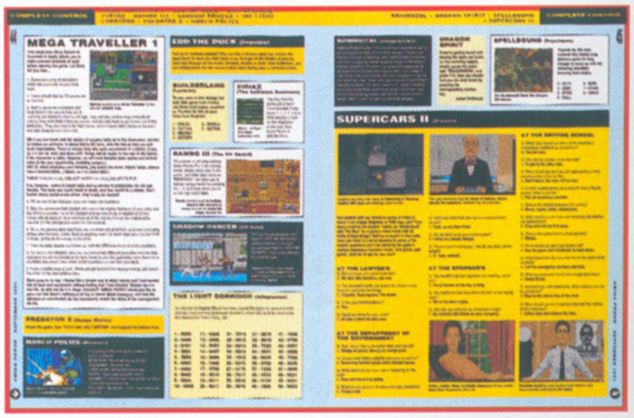
And that's not all! Who could forget The Bottom Line – AMIGA POWER's constantly updated review of the past year's games? In fact, all in all we rate over 300 pieces of (ahem) 'leisure computer software' every issue!





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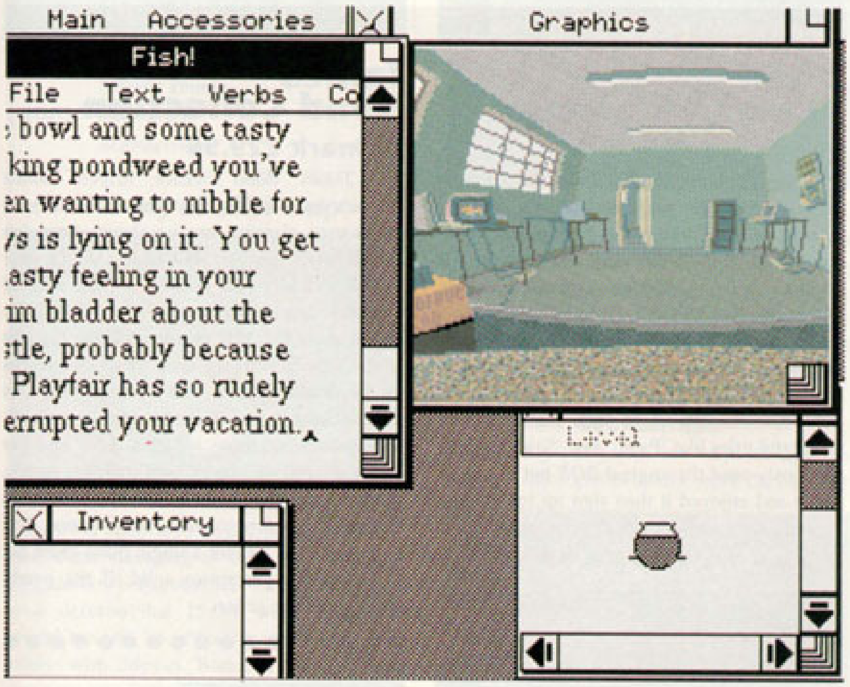
Now it's time to wind down with **Trenton Webb** as he puts together his K-Tel compilation pages, which includes some real donkeys along with a few well-picked thoroughbreds.

Spoutro

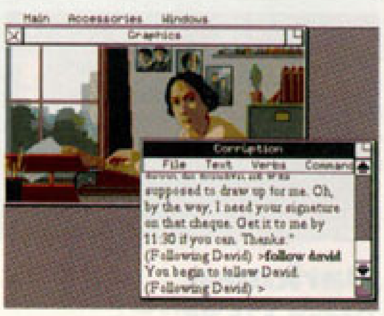
Magnetic Scrolls Collection

Virgin £29.99

Verdict 83%



Three classic adventures have been gathered together, but they aren't just re-issues of old text only games, but total re-workings. Now they all use the new Magnetic Scrolls 'window' adventure system that got it's first outing in Wonderland (AF24 70 per cent). *Fish, Corruption* and *The Guild of Thieves* are the games in question and they suit the new system well. *Fish* is an off the wall sort of adventure, that was originally designed by none other than *AF* regular Phil South. It gathered a cult following during its run first time out and it really benefits from this system, as it brings a greater graphic level to the whole affair.



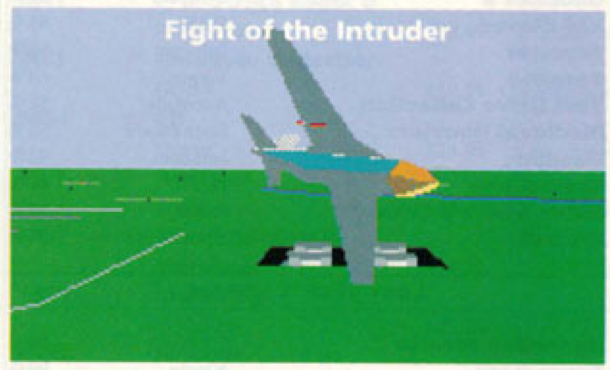
Corruption is a tale that now feels a little dated, staring yuppies, Porsches and wine bars. The story is still as good as ever though, setting up a tale of dirty dealing in the City. It's filled out with a few notes from a Filofax and a tape. Neat extras these make the game finishable. *Guild of Thieves* uses a more traditional setting, a fantasy world, where all the usual magic and fun are on offer to brave seekers of the truth.



The new system employed by Magnetic Scrolls is a shot in the arm, but it has limitations. It allows windows to be opened for the compass, the graphics, the text and map simultaneously. The downside is speed but adventurers haven't traditionally worried about that. As a re-masters edition the Collection brings Eighties text games into the Nineties graphic age. At the price anyone who fancies some classic adventures to twist their mind up with logic puzzles should give a try.

Magical History Score

This month's scores



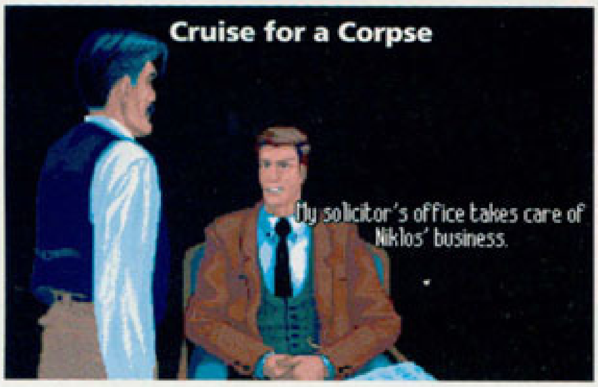
Flight Of The Intruder	Mirrorsoft	88%
Midwinter II	Rainbird	87%
Elf	Ocean	85%
Utopia	Gremlin	84%
Silent Service	MicroProse	82%
Stratego	Accolade	81%
Rolling Ronnie	Virgin	76%
Boston Bomb Club	Palace	74%
Pitfighter	Domark	60%
Final Fight	US Gold	60%
Altered Destiny	Accolade	54%
Zone Warrior	Electronic Arts	36%

Last month's scores

Cruise for a Corpse	US Gold	91%
Rodland	Storm	88%
Rise of the Dragon	Sierra	86%
Magic Pockets	Renegade	85%
Robin Hood	Millennium	80%
Blade Warrior	Image Works	74%
The Big Deal	Accolade	69%



Magical History Score

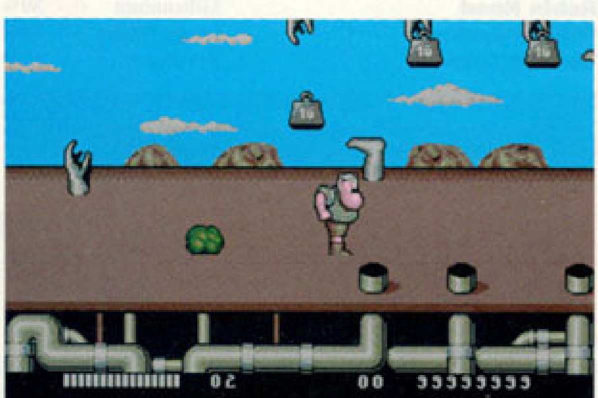


Cruise for a Corpse

Grandstand	Domark	69%
Nebulus 2	21st Century	63%
Gauntlet 3	US Gold	63%
Kid Gloves	GBH	61%
Sorcerer	Infocom	60%
Sarakon	Virgin	60%
Test Drive Collection	Accolade	58%
Medieval Warriors	Soundware	53%
Deadline	Infocom	42%
Executioner	Hawk	40%
Robin Smith's Cricket	D&H	35%
Cricket	Soundware	30%

Last year's scores

Operation Stealth	US Gold	90%
Supremacy	Virgin	90%
Monty Python's Flying Circus	Virgin	88%
Magic Fly	Electronic Arts	88%
Shadow of the Beast II	Psygnosis	87%
Extase	Virgin	86%
Time Machine	Activision	85%
Tie Break	Ocean	84%
Plotting	Ocean	81%
Simulcra	Microstyle	80%
Venus the Flytrap	Gremlin	79%
Thunderstrike	Millennium	77%
Unreal	UBI Soft	74%
Gold of the Aztecs	US Gold	73%
Bomber Mission Disk	Activision	71%
Ziriax	Software Business	68%
Starblade	Palace	67%
Codename Iceman	Sierra	64%
Colonel's Bequest	Sierra	60%
Yolanda	Millennium	49%
Web of Terror	Impressions	48%


Monty Ponthon's Flying Circus





Their Finest Missions

Lucasfilm £19.99

If winning the *Battle of Britain* (*Their Finest Hour*) *AF*11 90 per cent wasn't enough, Lucasfilm have designed a host of new missions for this multi-plane simulation. It includes: five Spitfire missions, four Hurricane, five BF109E, three BF110C-4, two Stuka, one DO 17Z-2, two HE 111 H-3 and a JU 88 A-1. If that means anything to you then you're probably already sold on the idea. The new missions are tough little numbers with delightful titles like 'Panic' and 'Suicide'. You obviously need the original *BOB* but if you've got it and enjoyed it then sign up for another tour of duty – on both sides!



Darkman

Ocean £25.99

A crackingly silly movie, *Darkman* had the chance to be a first-rate superhero game. Unfortunately it is anything but. You control a disfigured scientist who is tracking down his assailants. Luckily this guy can make false faces to help him enter the villains hideouts. The game uses two main styles a horizontal scrolling platform game and a Op Wolf-style photography sections where he gathers data to build the face he needs. The arcades section is pitifully easy, laughably so, apart from the unavoidable fatal sections. A strangely unexciting and highly finishable game.

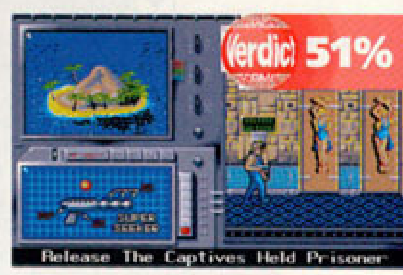




James Bond Collection

Domark £29.99

The James Bond licence helped launch Domark back in the day and while they've never been classics they've always been fun arcade blasts. The *Spy Who Loved Me*, *Licence to Kill* and *Live and Let Die* are the stars of this pack. *Spy* is an enjoyable over head up the screen shoot out, that vaguley follows the plot of the movie, with *Op Wolf* shoot out scenes for the finale. *Licence* is in a similar vein, this time sticking to the overhead style throughout, but introducing more vehicles. *Live and Let Die* is an into the screen boat shooting match, it scrolls fast, but looks a little too much like *SCI* or *Buggy Boy* to really be different. You may hesitate at £25 for a single Bond game but £30 for three guarantees solid, if not overly original, arcade action.



Thunderjaws

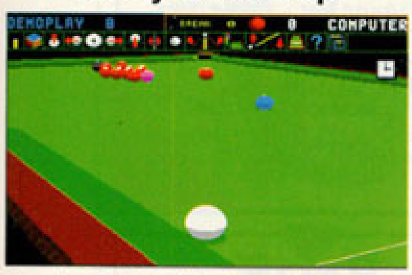
Domark £25.99

A scrolling horizontal scuba diving shoot-em-up and a leaping platform romp. You swim through a nest of nasties to reach a platform section then go back into the water. It's a multi-level, multi-style game that stresses joystick action above cerebral functions. Bright and colourful graphics that animate. That's being polite. *Thunderjaws* lacks real bite as the action offers little variety despite the regular changes of environment. There's no real spectacle and little threat. *Thunderjaws* was a weak arcade and not surprisingly the computer version fares little better.

BUDGET CHART

1(1)	**Full Contact**	
	Team 17	£9.99
2(2)	**TV Sports Football**	
	Mirror Image	£9.99
3(-)	**Supercars**	
	GBH	£7.99
4(-)	**New Zealand Story**	
	Hit Squad	£7.99
5(7)	**North and South**	
	Action 16	£7.99
6(5)	**Lombard RAC Rally**	
	Hit Squad	£7.99
7(3)	**Fantasy World Dizzy**	
	Code Masters	£6.99
8(9)	**Ninja Rabbits**	
	Micro Value	£6.99
9(6)	**Xenon 2**	
	Mirror Image	£9.99
10(-)	**Shinobi**	
	Mastertronic	£7.99

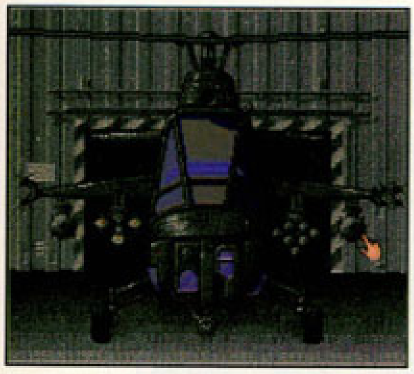
Jimmy Chalks 1 up



It's a clean 147 break for Jimmy White and his *Whirlwind Snooker*, straight in their at number one, even managing to fend off the mighty *Thunderhawk*. Rumour has it the game was in such demand that 15,000 went in the first week! It's still an office favourite here, especially with Messrs Bartucca and Ferguson (who to date is the only guy to beat Harry at his own game). If you want to see the man himself doing his snooker thang remember he'll be at the World Of Commodore show, November 14 –17th.

5 into 1 won't go!

Five, yes five Format Golds make up the top five. Now we're not crowing, but it is good to see quality software storming the charts: *Jimmy White, Thunderhawk, Cruise for a Corpse, Monkey Island* and *PGA Tour*. As they say, "One day all games will be built this way", but until then checkout Screenplay for solid advice on what's hot.





Party pack

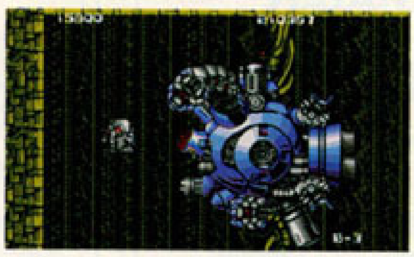
With the big-gun Compilations already hitting the Charts the software houses are making sure Cliff Richard won't make the Xmas Number One. (Wrong charts -Ed.). *The Rainbow Collection* leads the charge packing three of



the cutest games ever (*Rainbow Islands, Bubble Bobble* and *New Zealand Story*). Next up is *Double Double Bill* from Mirrorsoft: one for fans of Cinemaware, packing four of their games into one box. Last is the driving epic *Test Drive Collection*, with more cars and tracks than Nigel Mansell would care to see.

Weirdness

It's a funny old game, but why, oh why, oh why, do some games hardly break the chart ice



when they're released then suddenly pop up years later. *Stun Runner* slips in this month at 28 followed by *Atomic Robokid* at 29. Both were lined up as potential biggies last Christmas and never made much of an impact, yet now they've both turned up! As Jimmy G says though they are funny old games!

Below

Why have some games not got scores? Well, you see it's like this: Conflict Europe, as we understand it was released way back in the days of Issue 4 when it scored 65 per cent. Its emergence in the charts seems shall we say outrageous, unless it's the budget version. But we can only go by the information were given by Uncle Gallup. *Brigade Commander*, we would have reviewed it two issues back but come time to play, we found the disk corrupted. As soon as we receive a new copy you'll find it in Spoutro. *Striker Manager*, we haven't seen hide or hair of. If the peeps at D&H want us to review it we'll give it the Spoutro treatment.

THE AMIGA FULL PRICE CHART

1(-)	New	**Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker**		
		Virgin	£29.99	FG91%
2(-)	New	**Thunderhawk**		
		Core Design	£30.99	FG90%
3(-)	New	**Cruise for a Corpse**		
		US Gold	£27.99	FG90%
4(3)	▼	**Monkey Island**		
		US Gold	£29.99	FG92%
5(2)	▼	**PGA Tour Golf**		
		Electronic Arts	£25.99	FG90%
6(1)	▼	**Manchester United Europe**		
		Krisalis	£25.99	80%
7(5)	▼	**Eye of the Beholder**		
		US Gold	£30.99	FG92%
8(4)	▼	**F-15 Strike Eagle II**		
		MicroProse	£29.99	FG90%
9(6)	▼	**Rainbow Collection**		
		Ocean	£19.99	Compilation
10(-)	New	**Elf**		
		Ocean	£24.99	85%
11(-)	New	**Rodland**		
		Storm	£25.99	88%
12(-)	New	**Silent Service II**		
		MicroProse	£34.99	82%
13(7)	▼	**Lemmings**		
		Psygnosis	£25.55	FG92%
14(8)	▼	**Armour-Geddon**		
		Psygnosis	£25.99	FG85%
15(-)	New	**Striker Manager**		
		D&H Games	£24.99	See Below
16(-)	New	**Double Double Bill**		
		Image Works	£35.99	Compilation
17(10)	▼	**Gods**		
		Renegade	£25.53	FG90%
18(11)	▼	**Life and Death**		
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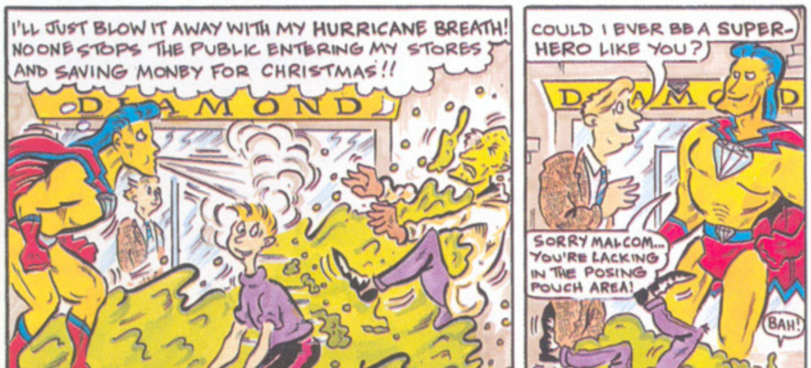
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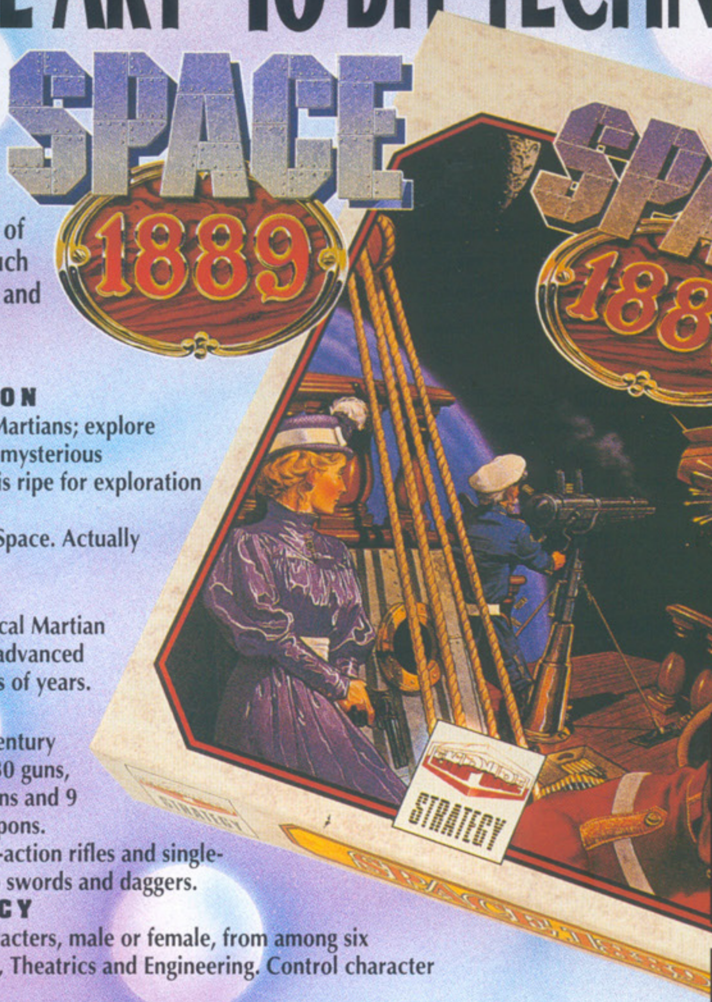
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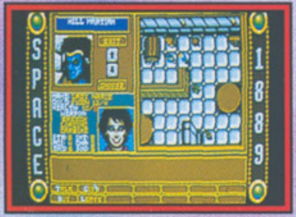
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Winners Box

Right then! Who's getting those highly sought after £50 Gamebusters vouchers this month? Well, the first one goes to Steven J Senior for his *Simpsons* tips and the second is winging it's way to Glynn Owen for the *Magic Pockets* map... well it would be if we had his address! Send it in please (as well as some proof that it was you another copy of the map or your age will do).

The two Helping Hand vouchers go to Sean Hart for the *Gods* tip and the person who got sent in the new version of the *Elite* cheat. By the way, if that person could get in touch with us again, he may find something to his benefit! Just write in, telling us how you contacted us in the first place (for proof that is). Well done anyway!

If you've a decent cheat, map, solution or playing guide to a game, then send it in to GAMEBUSTERS, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Game Busters

It's no good swearing away at your machine, just because you can't get past level one of the latest game that's eating away all of your spare time. Or are you pulling your hair out trying to work out where that hidden bonus and extra life could possibly be? Fret no longer: **Maff Evans** is coming to the rescue with a fistful of tips (and dollars... well sterling actually) to help you on your way.

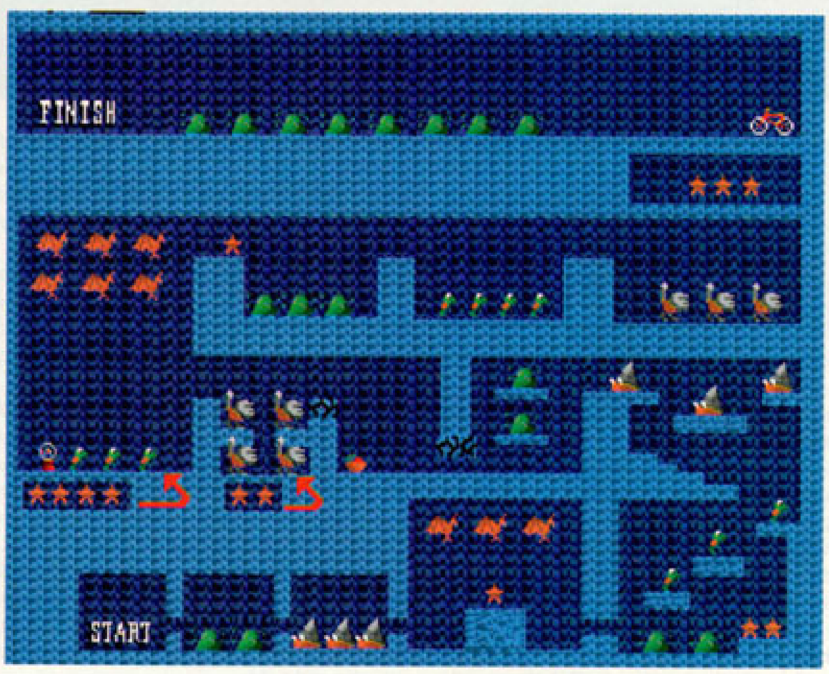
MAGIC POCKETS COVERDISK DEMO

Judging by the response we've had, this little taste of the Bitmap Brothers' latest game proved incredibly popular. If you've enjoyed the demo, but can't play it for toffee, or even just want to boost your ability then have a butchers at this map. It could make you a leaner, meaner... er... little kid with shades!



Glynn Owen,
Address Unknown

£50



PREDATOR 2



A lone cop fighting two drug warring gangs and a vicious interplanetary hunter? Well the odds are certainly heavily stacked against you on this one, aren't they? What you need here is a bit of help!

Start the game as normal and pause the action. Now type in YOU'RE ONE UGLY MOTHER and restart the action. You should now be some kind of super-cop with infinite energy. Maybe then you'll stand a better chance against the villains and the nasty, scaly-skinned alien killer!

Richard Taylor,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

NAVY SEALS

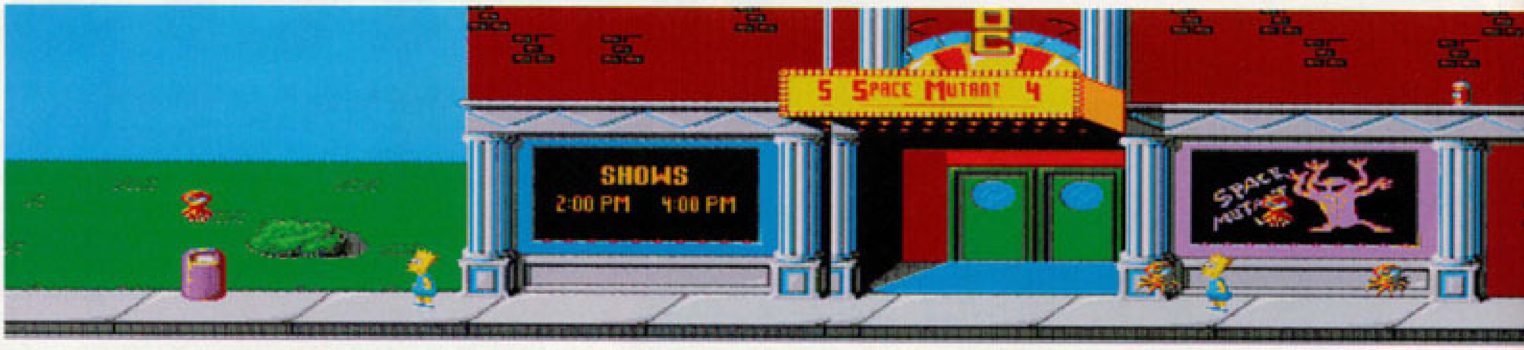
It takes a hard man to be one of those especially tough Navy Seal types. Unfortunately, most people aren't quite tough enough. Still, you can have a bash at it thanks to Ocean's movie licence. What's that? You still can't manage to complete the missions? Well it's good job that we've got this cheat for you then, isn't it?

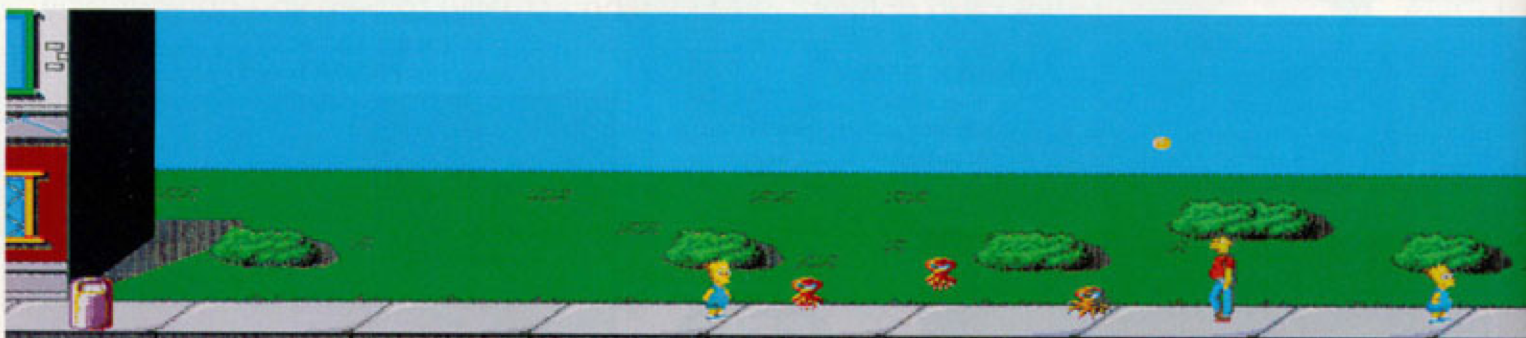
Play until you get a high enough score to get your name onto the high-score table, then enter your name as PSBOYS. Start the game again and press H to pause. Now you can press Escape to skip to the next level. Any time you want to jump onto the next stage, simply press H then Escape. Still, if you can't do the first stages, then skipping to the later ones may be even more embarrassing, so be warned!

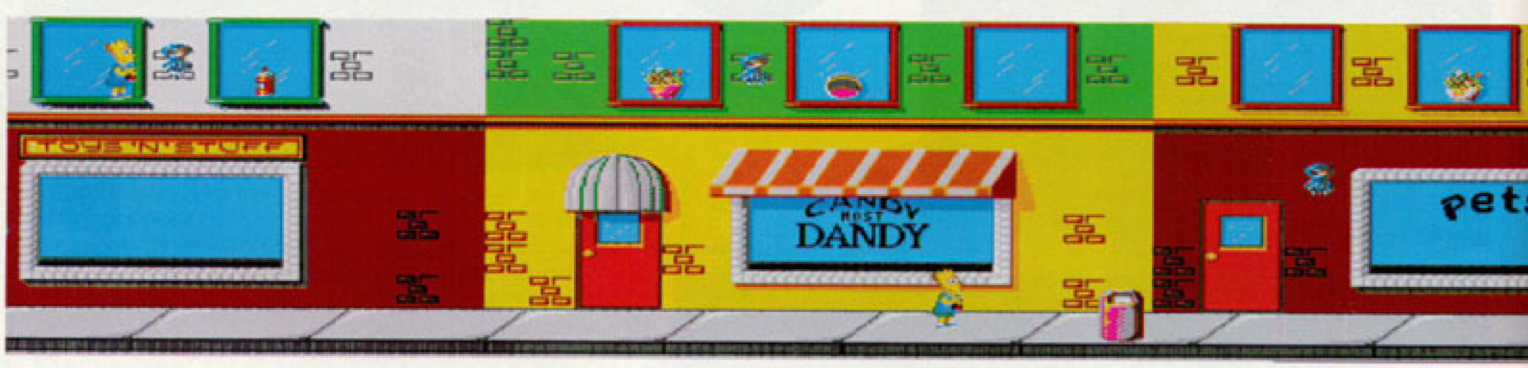
Woody Haring,
TJ Hoofddorp, Netherlands

The Simpsons

£50 – Bart Simpson vs The Space Mutants







Begin by facing Bart to the right and do a big spring jump off the bin to collect the Krusty bonus. Walk on by the cinema (get the timing right past the creatures) until you get to Moe's. Jump up onto the ledge of the first window and up to the next ledge. Do a long jump left to collect the spray can, but watch you don't hit the mutants in front of the poster!

Go to the right of the poster and face left to spray it until it changes colour. Carry on to the left and spray the bin, then head right. Go past Moe's until you reach the phone booth. Jump up on the booth and right onto the washing line. Walk along the line so that the washing falls onto the purple objects below.

Jump across onto the windows and collect the spray can. Drop down and spray the bin, then head left and jump over the nasty under the washing line to get another Krusty bonus. Head back to the right and jump over the three nasties past the bin you just sprayed. Carry on and enter Tool World. Buy a key and a wrench, then leave the shop. Walk behind the Fire Hydrant and use the wrench so that the water washes the paint off the awning, then spray the hydrant. Jump onto the window ledge, then onto the door and finally jump up to spray the flowers - you have to spray them while you are jumping.

Carry on to the right and enter Mel's Novelty Hut. Buy one cherry bomb and spend all but two of your coins on rockets, then leave the shop. Jump onto the sill, then onto the door and then jump up to spray the flowers (it takes a bit of patience). Continue right, under the monster and collect the extra life.

Go right, into Toys 'N' Stuff and buy a whistle and a magnet. Jump onto the edge and onto the door before leaping up to spray the flowers. Go right, jump over the alien and collect the spray can.

Walk right until you get to the bin (if you want you can knock the ball up in the air to hit the paint can, but it's a bit tricky). Spray the bin then jump onto it to get to the top windows. Jump across to the paint pot so that it spills, then carefully make your way past the nasty. Slowly drop off the left-hand side so that you fall onto the canopy above the door, then jump up and spray the flowers.

Go to the right until you reach the pet shop, jump up onto the window ledge, onto the door and back across the gap to spray the pot. Position yourself in the top left corner of the window and drop your cherry bomb. If you are in the right position, the bomb should hit the bird cage and free the bird. Watch out for the dog that appears!

Walk right and jump up on to the grass to make a purple policeman appear. Spray him blue and then quickly run away. Next up walk along to the statue and fire a rocket at the bird to make it fly away.

Jump over the barrier onto the skateboard and immediately slow down to a halt. Push up diagonally while pressing fire to get to the top of the path and then accelerate. Jump over the dogs and the blue aliens, then wham along to the end, but watch out for the Skate Punk!

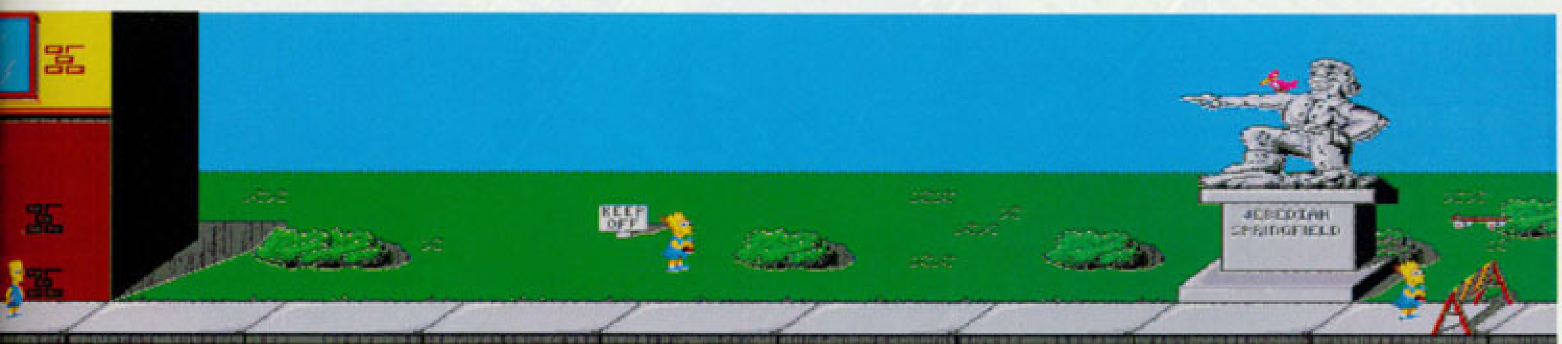
Leap over the barrier to get back on foot and carry on walking right. Dodge the nasties and spray the fountain as you pass. Go under the aliens in front of the Bowling Hall and fire a rocket at the sign.

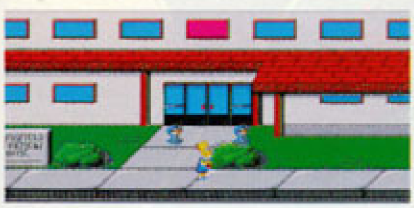
For some of you readers this may be one of the first Amiga games you play, since it is included in the Cartoon Classics bundle. However, despite being one of your first attempts at cracking an Amiga game, the going is pretty tough, so here is a guide to completing the first level.












END OF LEVEL BADDY

Continue to the right, spray the fountain and dodge the alien, then carry on to the retirement home. When you see a purple window, fire a rocket at it to make the purple blind lift up. Carry on to the main entrance and watch out for the nasties as you fire a rocket at the next purple window. Now check your rocket supply. If you've still got some left you're all right. If you need more on the other hand, you'll have to go back to Mel's Novelty Hut. To do this, stand in front of the retirement home and use the key. This should transport you back to the house near Moe's Tavern. Go to Mel's, get some rockets and use the key at the house to get back to the retirement home. Go to the right and fire a rocket at the next purple window. If you've done everything right, this should be your last target and you will be given a message telling you to go right to the guardian.

To beat the big baddy, keep firing at him and jump the bombs that he throws. With a bit of luck you will be able to duff him and reach the second level.

Steven J Senior,
High Heaton, Newcastle Upon Tyne

General Hints

There are a few hidden extras to find throughout the level, such as extra lives and more money. These are usually hidden in bins and bushes. To find them, just jump into them. However, you need to be careful, since some bushes contain bees which have a lethal sting!

You can get extra help defeating end-of-level guardians via the disguised aliens found throughout the levels. To spot them, put on your X-ray specs. If a person seems to have a wibbly head with tentacles sprouting out of it, jump on top of them and they will drop a ball. Pick up the ball to get a letter. If you manage to spell out the name of a family member, that person will then appear at the end of the level to help you defeat the guardian. For example, if Maggie appears she throws rocks above your head which you can deflect towards the baddy along with your normal shots.

If you miss one or two of the targets, don't panic! If you notice the sign near the cinema, this should give you a clue. Watch out for the timer and go to the cinema when it reaches 400 and 200. At these times a person will come out of the doors. Just spray them to knock your target counter down.


Four aces for the AMIGA
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PREHISTORIK

This cute little caveman game is full of pretty straightforward arcade action, but to get the most out of the Stone Age action it helps to know a few tricks. And what have we here? A few tricks! What a stroke of luck.

The Secret Rooms

After killing the strange turtle-like creature on the first level, you should come to a screen with two carnivorous fish bouncing up and down in the water, along with four banks. To get to the secret room don't jump over the first well. Instead, jump inside it and fall down into the secret room!

Later on the first level, look out for a ladder near some water which leads up to a platform containing an egg. Climb the ladder and take the egg, then go to the left into the water to find the submarine room.

There is also a way to find some hidden extra food. Go to the third screen of level three and jump forward hitting empty space. The hidden food should now appear. Janer discovered this after killing the big, green dinosaur on level 10, so bear this in mind if the food doesn't appear at first.

Janer Didier,
Riecimes, France



Helping Hand

Maff Evans has a rummage in the Hand's postbag, only to find some frustrated Amiga souls in dire straights. What they need is some help via a bit of plain and simple cheating.

Something new for something old

I desperately need a cheat to get me going on *Elite* (an old game I know, but still a brilliant one). The cheat you mentioned doesn't seem to work on my copy, and all I want in life is a docking computer! Please help me.

Stephen Hearnshaw,
Ainsdale, Southport

*Don't worry Stephen! You're not the only one who's had this problem. Jim Wingham, Neil Millard and Robert Cole have all had the same hassle. Never mind, we have the answer. The cheat works as normal, but instead of entering SARA to access the cheat you enter SUZANNE. Then enter the proper access code and press the * key to get to the hack screen. Now you can boldly go and rob, shoot and pillage the spaceways to your heart's content!*

In Gods we trust

Could you please let me know if there is a cheat to give you infinite lives or energy on *Gods.*

Lee Copson,
Nuneaton

£25

Lee is not alone in his plight. Tracy West and Sean Hopkins are two more desperate Gods players who are having difficulty with the game. Well Sean Hart has come up with a rather strange answer to the problem which he found out by accident. On level two, buy a shield and a magic potion, then get three fireballs and three stars. Spend all of your remaining money on food and health. Collect all the gems in the usual manner, then get a key and make for the exit. Now comes the tricky bit...

When you descend the last ladder, two thieves will appear. Make sure that you don't quite have enough energy to survive a direct contact! Before going down the ladder, release your magic potion, then climb down and open the door. Stand in front of the door ready to leave, but don't push up yet! Wait until the thieves jump down at you and as soon as they touch you push the joystick up. You may lose that life, but then something rather strange will happen. The bonus will start to whiz up for quite some time, until the game starts again on world two with 28 extra men and about five million points!

Brain Strain

I need your help in a big way. In the game *Neuromancer*, I can't find Comlink 5.0. Please help me find it! Any suggestions or recommendations will be appreciated.

John Stefanidis,
Ionia, Greece

Well, I'll certainly have a go! You've obviously managed to get the earlier versions of Comlink, so it may be an idea to check in Yakuza - since that's where the top Comlinks are found. Happy jacking!

Rev it up and ride!

Please, please, please will you help me with *Toyota Celica GT Rally*? I cannot get past England and I am going nuts over it!

Robert Chattoe,
Wildwood, Staffordshire

Sure can! All you have to do is get into a race and press the C key to jump straight to the next stage. Pretty simple, eh?

I'm afraid that's all we've got space for this issue! The lucky winners of the two £25 Helping Hand vouchers this month are Sean Hart for the *Gods* tip and someone out there deserves a prize for the new version of the *Elite* cheat (so please get in touch). Good on yer fellas!

If we didn't get to your letter this time I'm sorry, but if you write in again with another bunch of tips we may be able to squeeze it in next time.

All you Gamebusting fans will be pleased to know that due to the success of the original *Screenplay* book (the initial print-run completely sold out) Maff Evans is currently putting together a second volume. This won't just be your update with most of the same games in, oh no! This is a completely new volume with hosts of new reviews, maps, cheats, hints and solutions to the latest games along with some help with the classics. If you're interested in games, how can you afford to miss it? Watch this space for more details!

If you're stuck on a particular game or have a solution to a letter printed in the magazine then write it down and send it in to us at HELPING HAND, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

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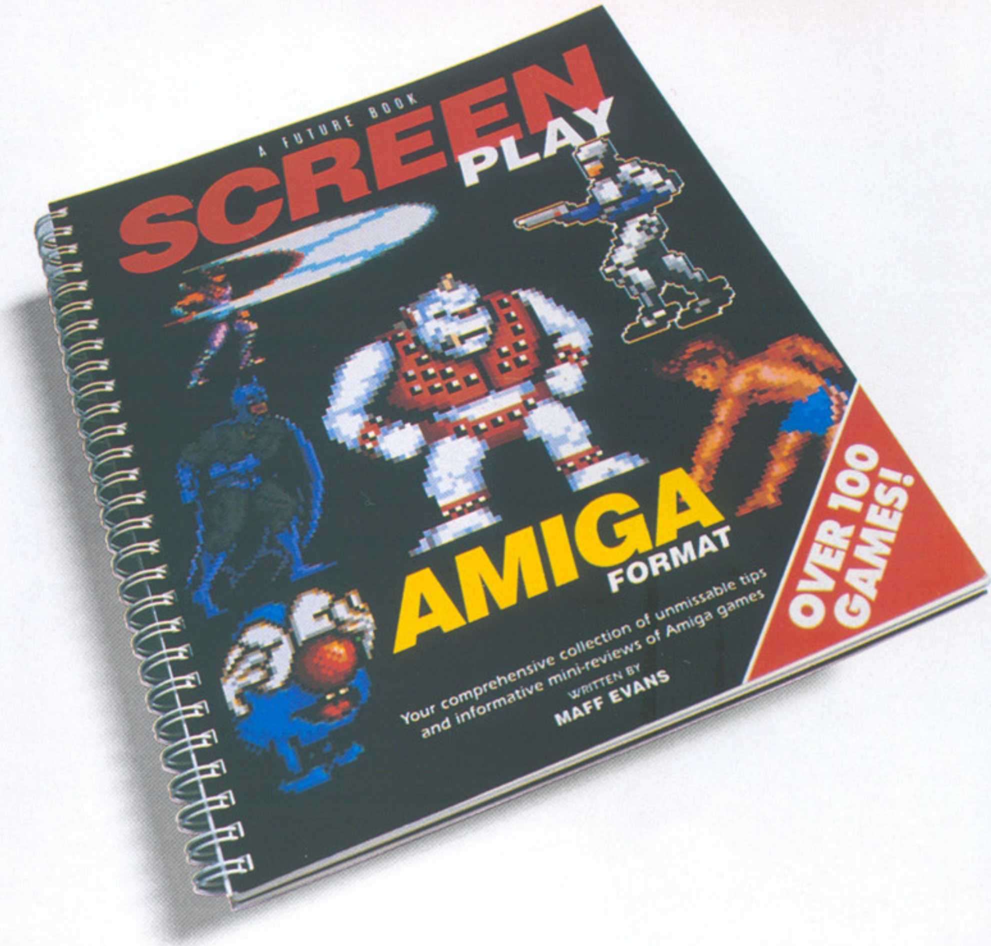
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Playing for Real

How real can your Amiga get? To see if driving games and flight sims actually put you in the hot seat, **James Leach** talks to the professionals to discover what they really think of the Amiga world of simulations.

HOW OFTEN DO you race high performance cars? How often do you fly bombing missions or dogfight with enemy fighters at twice the speed of sound?

Not often? Then how can you realistically expect to judge the Amiga sims that claim to let you do just that? The truth is you can't. You can only compare a simulation to what you think the reality is like. If you've watched Top Gun or a Formula One Grand Prix you might have a better idea, and if you're a plane or car buff you might be even more well informed. But unless you're an expert, you won't know how real simulations on the Amiga can be.

Amiga Format can tell you. We took our Amigas to professionals from the Royal Air Force and the motor racing world. We then gave them the best games and let them play and judge for themselves how accurate they thought the sims really were.



Two tons of raw power. Erling Jenson's Championship-winning Rover V8 is usually parked outside the garage he owns in Bath. the car was constructed and modified over a period of years until it's now capable of 200mph.

Erling Jensen

British Rallycross Champion 1985,
RAC Two Wheel Drive Champion 1987
and Group A racing driver.



Erling played Hard Drivin' (Domark), Indianapolis 500 (Electronic Arts) and Stunt Car Racer (Microstyle).

Hard Drivin'

"The car isn't easy to drive in this game. The circuits are, erm, interesting, but not something I'd ever like to come up against! But one of the first things I noticed was that you could sometimes drive right through a barn-type building just where the speed-track branches from the stunt track. Not very realistic! The other cars don't look too impressive, either, but the speed is exciting, and there's that loop, once I got the speed right, I managed to beat it.

"Using a joystick rather than a wheel also takes some getting used to. You can't feel the road, of course, like you do when you're driving, and you certainly can't spin the wheels to opposite lock in sharp corners."

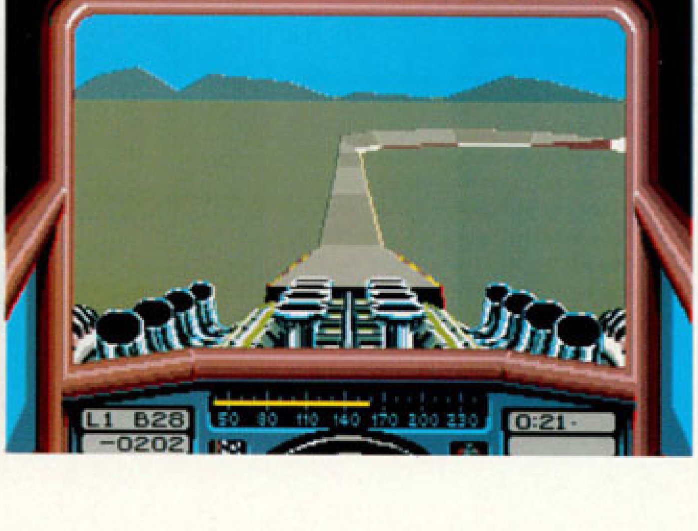
Stunt Car Racer

"Again, the circuits aren't a lot like real life, thank goodness. This is a powerful car, and must have incredible suspension to take some of these jumps. I spent a lot of time falling off the track here, partly because the cambers (the way the track leans at the corners), which are very important to fast driving, seemed to lean the opposite way, so you'd be pushed out to the edges of the corners.

"Racing cars are noisy places, and the engine noise here is very good. The pitch changes as you rev the engine up and everything, so it's pretty accurate on that count. The only thing is I've never seen tracks quite like these so the game isn't much like any racing I've ever known and it's hard for me to compare it to real life."

Undaunted, Erling races towards a prolonged spell in hospital with Hard Drivin' (left) and Stunt Car Racer (right).





Indianapolis 500

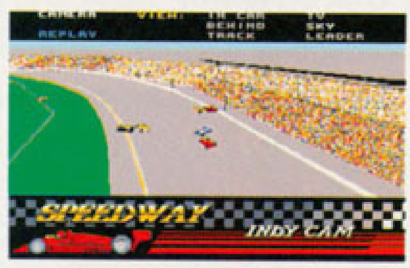
"This one is definitely my favourite. It's the most like driving in a real race. The feeling of speed is tremendous and as you're belting round, you can see other cars in the mirrors moving up behind you. Whenever this happened, I swerved around to stop them getting past, but they usually swerved the other way and went through. It's very realistic because this is what happens on any race circuit.

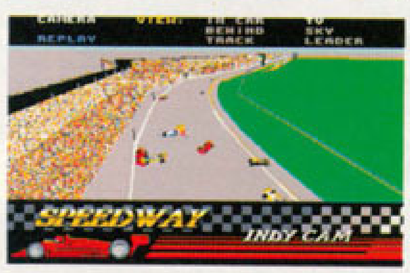
"I like the ability to adjusting the suspension of the car, too. Suspension is incredibly important when you're racing at high speed, because it affects the way the whole car behaves. It causes oversteer, understeer and all sorts of effects.

"Also when you crash, wreckage flies all over the track. I crashed in the British Rallycross Championships in 1986, so I know what it feels like – my Rover V8 was completely destroyed, by the way, but the accident wasn't my fault. After cars start to crash, as you go round again you can still see pieces of wreckage lying on the track, so you've got avoid those as well as the other racers!"

By far the most realistic in Erling's eyes was Indianapolis 500. The outside views provide rubber-neckers with the ability to watch the most horrendous crashes over and over again, whilst the in-car views keep you on the edge of your seat as you tear round the course. Erling found the behaviour of the computer-controlled cars pretty similar to people he's actually raced against, and liked the idea of the wrecked cars remaining as obstacles on the track until the end of the race.











AFTERWORD

"They're great fun, these games. They don't feel very accurate as you're driving, though. There isn't the noise, vibration and excitement – and of course there's no feedback through the steering wheel – but they've got lots of nice features. My favourite out of all the games is definitely Indianapolis 500. It's got an excellent circuit, it's fast and the ability to overtake lots of other drivers adds a real competitive edge.

"Playing the Indianapolis 500 game could actually teach people something about the way racing cars are set up. Not many people even know what oversteer and understeer are, let alone how they affect the handling of a car.

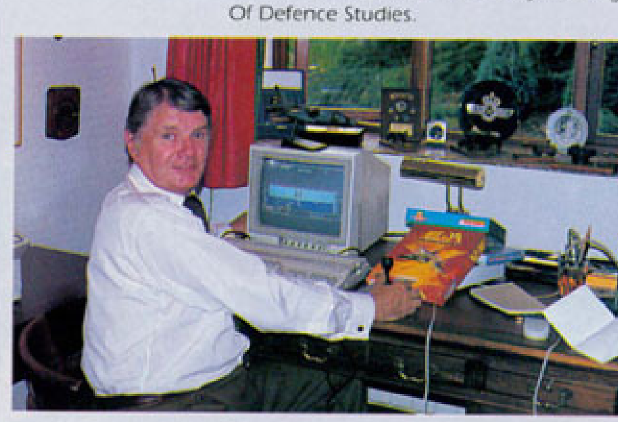
"My kids enjoyed playing the games too. They've got a Spectrum, but this Amiga is a bit different. When they won a round of Stunt Car Racer, they got a picture of a guy with a wreath round his neck, which they immediately identified as me.

"But having the Amiga did cause tears, with the kids wanting to play all the time, so we decided we wouldn't be getting our own!"



Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Armitage

former Commandant of the Royal College Of Defence Studies.



Sir Michael played F15 II Strike Eagle (Microprose), MiG 29 Fulcrum (Domark), F/A 18 Interceptor (EA), Proflight (HiSoft) and Afterburner (Activision).

F15 II Strike Eagle

"The aircraft doesn't handle well. The joystick is sluggish at first, then flips far too quickly. But the Head Up Display is impressive, however, and it gives many of the functions one would reasonably expect to see.

"The weapons used in the game are well-simulated models of AGM 65 Mavericks, AMRAAMS and AIM 9 Sidewinders, and the geography is also reasonably accurate, with Suda Bay, Tripoli and so on. In the game there is a lot of on-screen data to assimilate, but it is presented clearly."



MIG 29 Fulcrum

"Now this is rather more stimulating than the F15. The aircraft handles better, and the outside displays are more realistic. Being a Russian aircraft, the instruments differ from NATO fighters, and are more in the fashion on needles and gauges, but they are clear once you learn the functions.

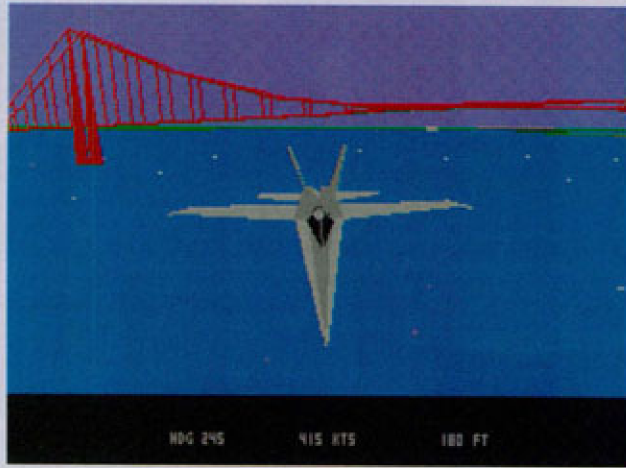


F15 Strike Eagle (above) has an excellent HUD, but the aircraft's handling is less than impressive.

"The outside views of the aircraft are also good, and from angles slightly resemble Royal Air Force recruitment films!

"Oh, and why, if the runway is aligned North-South, is it clearly marked 29? It's out by over 60 degrees, which could cause an accident or two!"

Back in the USSR with Mig29 Fulcrum (right). Although Sir Michael's never flown the plane in question, he felt the handling, instrument panel and outside displays were all pretty realistic.



F/A 18 Interceptor (above) was Sir Michael's favourite for graphics. He thought the controls were also most like a real aircraft and the HUD (head up display) displayed data clearly as well. San Francisco, laid out below, also looks good if you swoop in at low level.

The real thing. An F14 Tomcat (left) loaded with Sparrow and Sidewinder missiles.

F/A 18 Interceptor

"Now this is even better. The control feel is far more consistent, more like that of a real aircraft. It's possible to achieve steady rates of turn and one can easily perform manoeuvres such as the Immelman Turn and the Split S. The instrument panel is interesting, even though it's much simpler than the other games I have just seen. The HUD is good – it's clear, has useful data such as the G-meter as well as the standard height, speed and direction data, and isn't clogged with other unnecessary complications. It's everything a simple HUD should be.

"The game is a lot of fun, with San Francisco below, and the combat is fairly well represented. It's good."

Proflight



The most detailed and accurate sim of them all, Proflight is best flown using a mouse.

"There's certainly a large instrument panel here! It's remarkably detailed but strangely, the HUD doesn't display any figures. This isn't like the real Tornado Head Up Display at all. The Proflight HUD just seems to have moving lines on it, which aren't really much use to a pilot in combat, who can't afford to look away from the outside world to focus on small gauges in front of his knees.



"Otherwise it's a detailed and accurate simulation. It's very flyable using the mouse rather than the joystick. It's also got a very helpful manual – one that even goes into the theory of flight. Whoever wrote this knew what he was talking about, and for anyone interested in learning about flying rather than just pushing a computer joystick around, this is a really excellent introduction."

Afterburner



Slot in 20p and blast off with Afterburner. Fast, but not a sim and Sir Michael wasn't impressed.

"Wait a minute! This is an arcade game! It looks like you're meant to be flying the F14 Tomcat, but it's pretty silly. It's nothing like a real aircraft whatsoever. What an oddly unsatisfying game!"

AFTERWORD

"I haven't tried a computer joystick before. It's rather difficult to use because it's quite unlike the feel of an aircraft's control column. But once gets the hang of it, the things you can achieve, with the programs are remarkable. These really are impressive flight simulations. There are a lot of options and a high interest level. The action is condensed into a few minutes, unlike real combat missions, which involve a great deal more uneventful flying.

"None of these can of course give an accurate idea of the environment a combat pilot will find himself in with today's fast jets. There just isn't any feedback on any of the controls. But what is interesting is the level of technical accuracy included with the programs (except Afterburner, of course). There is a lot of data displayed in front of you and the ability to check it whilst concentrating on a dog-fight is very useful indeed.

"When I was teaching people to fly in the Air Force, I came across trainees who would either ignore their vital instruments in order to look out, or would fix on one or more cockpit instruments and ignore the outside world altogether! These programs go some way towards teaching scanning – checking all the instruments in a coherent manner.

"The only problem is that this won't teach you to keep a good lookout in the sky around you as well; but you can hardly expect that from any but the most advanced Air Combat simulators used by the RAF and costing several million pounds.

"But overall, the standard is impressive. It's amazing what they can do nowadays."

MiG 29M Super Fulcrum

Now's your chance to try a state-of-the-art 1Mb flight simulation – just whack in the Coverdisk and read on for a few flying tips.

The demo starts with your plane at the end of a runway. Obviously, you can't take off without some engine thrust. The + and – keys can be used to fine tune this, although the number keys 4 to 0 will do just as well. So hit the 0 key and your plane will start taxing. Press P to pause the game and read on.

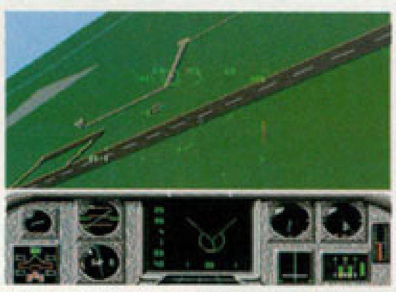
Right, what are you playing with? The demo defaults to mouse control, which can be a bit sensitive at first. Switch to joystick with ALT-J, or keyboard (the cursor keys) with CTRL-K. Analogue joysticks are catered for by just pressing CTRL-J.

Whichever controller you have selected, the principle is the same. Pushing forward will lower the nose, up will raise it. Left and right will roll the plane in the relevant direction. Easy isn't it?

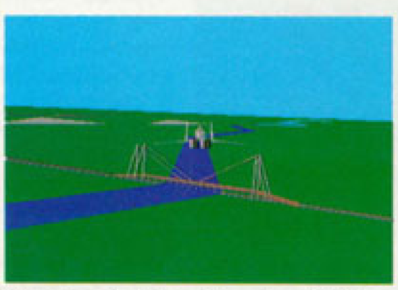
Press P again to unpause the game, and pull back on your controller. At about 300 KPH (speed is metric, height is measured in metres) the plane will start to lift. Keep pulling until you're climbing quite respectably – you don't want to get too close to the ground. Ease off on the power with the – key, because full power is heavy on fuel.



It's a wise idea to start attacking the airfield at some distance – here an AA-7 Atoll is locked on and just waiting for dispatch.



When you're this close to the airfield, the more adventurous will switch to S-240 missiles and hose down the targets, while beginners are advised to pull up (notice the dark G effect).



Where a road and river intersect, you'll find a bridge. Endless fun for the aerobatic, it's possible to destroy the middle section with S-240s.



A typical dogfight – the pilot has manoeuvred hard to get a lock with an AA-8 Aphid, but it only last a few seconds. Wait for a better lock or release at once: it's your choice.

THE MISSION

The demo is not just about flying, although that's all you should attempt at first. Located to the north east of you is an enemy airbase, complete with a couple of aircraft. If you look closely at the HUD display you'll notice a vertical red mark. You should turn your plane towards this – yes, it's not easy to get the plane level again!

Practise zipping around the sky, but do try to stay above ground level. It is very easy to black or red out due to the high manoeuvring – the screen starts going grey and then goes totally dead. If you don't like realistic gravitational effects, press G to turn them off.

Try to concentrate on making all your movements clean and simple. To turn, roll the plane and hold it – pulling back can increase your rate of turn, but the G effects are greater. Practise and more practise is essential if you've never flown a plane before.

Once you've got some competency in flying, check out the views. If you're using the keyboard cursor keys, read function key rather than keypad. Press keypad 2 – this is the view directly behind you. Try keypad 1, keypad 4, keypad 7, keypad 8. The view should have panned around, right from behind you to inside the cockpit. Fighter pilots always need to keep an eye out.

Press the V key, for an external view of your MiG. Go around it again with the keypad number keys – the views are much better, are they not? You may notice that your landing gear is still down – press L to retract it. Hit V again to get back into the cockpit.

WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Your plane is armed with four different types of weapons – use the delete left key to cycle through them. AA-8 Aphid missiles are for taking out enemy aircraft, AA-7 Atolls perform a similar job on ground targets, while S-240 unguided rockets and the cannon are general weapons which aren't particularly good at anything.

Select AA7s and fly towards the red marker on your HUD (the enemy airbase, remember). Try and keep an eye on your radar scope – when there's a contact on it just hit on the Return key to lock the AA7 on: the target will be highlighted with a green box. Press the space bar to fire it (right mouse button if you're using the mouse). Keep locking on and firing (hit return then space) until you run out of missiles.

The adventurous types will, at this point, flick to guns or S240s and go in low for a strafing run across the airfield. For the moment, select AA8s and start turning, pressing the return key every so often to look for aircraft.

Once you have a lock you also have a choice – wait to get a better lock or fire at once. If the target has a red box around it, the missile is locked on properly and you have a high chance of knocking it out of the sky. Green locks might damage it but probably won't take it out straight away.

Note that this is also true of your aircraft – you can be damaged without being shot down (loss of power, your HUD or radar doesn't work, and so on). If you hear a strange warbling tone, that's a missile being fired at your aircraft. Hit C (for chaff) and F (for flares) to drop some decoys, then start jinking all around the sky looking for the culprit.

Finally try landing. Sorry, no tips about that one, except that it makes sense to land as slow as you can. To receive a mission debrief you have to land again, on the runway from where you took off. I've not quite managed it myself – touching down is the easy bit, you have to stop as well!

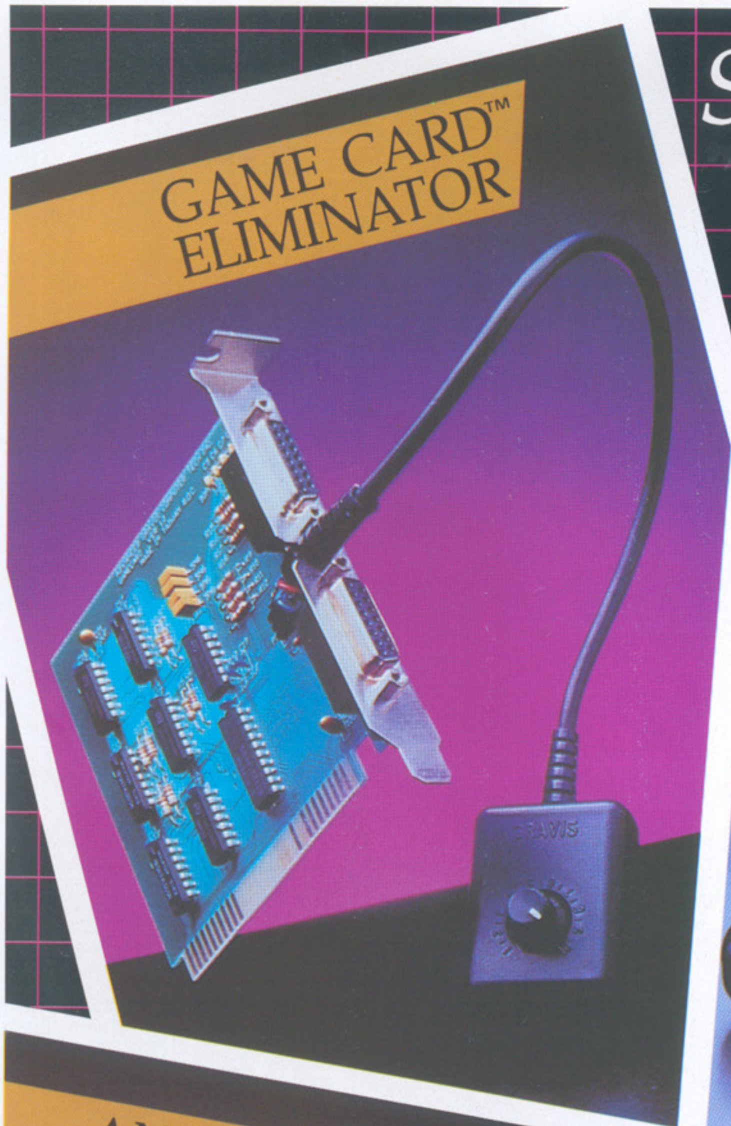


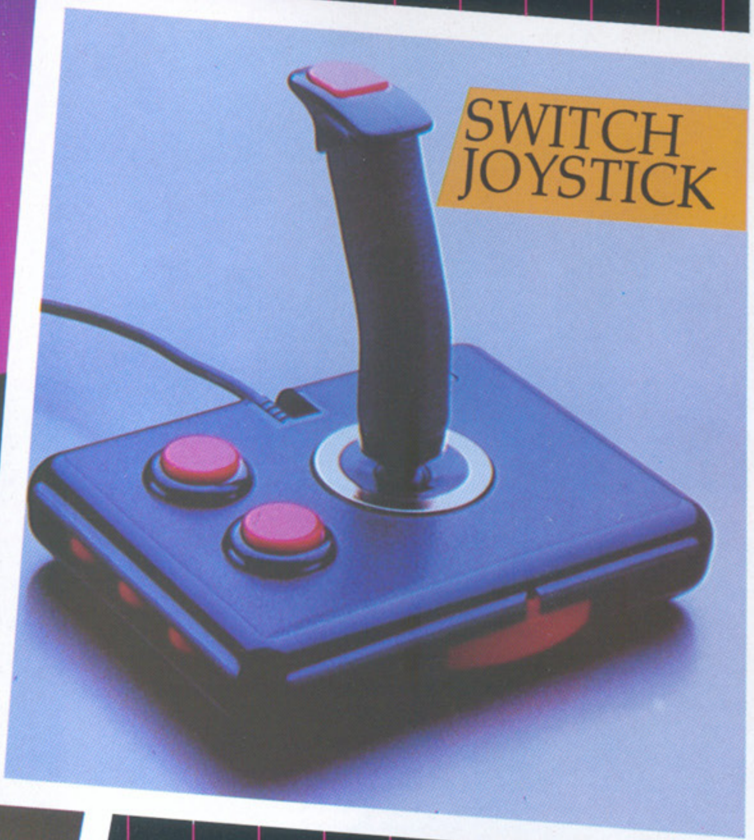
OTHER CONTROLS

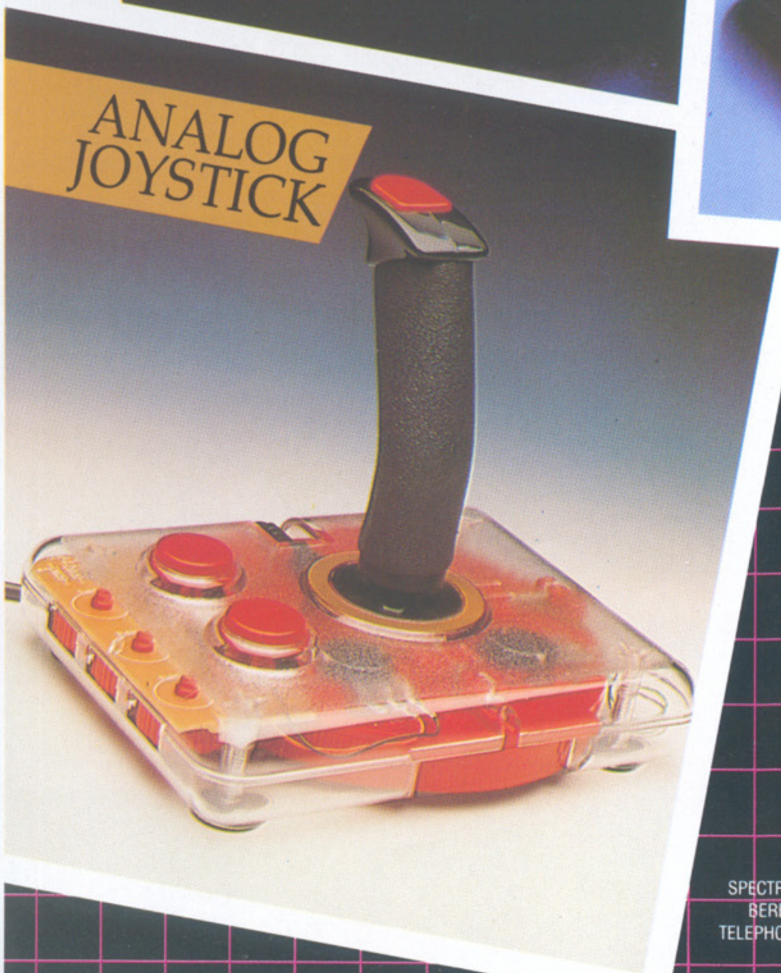
Landing Gear	L
Wheel Brakes	W
Air Brakes	B
Eject	CTRL E
Calibrate analogue joystick	CTRL Z
Pitch Trim Up	Keypad +
Pitch Trim Down	Keypad –
Zero Pitch Trim	Keypad *
Rudder	< and >
Drop Flares	F
Drop Chaff	C
Autostab on/off	a
Detail level	[
Cycle Radar Range	/
Radar on/off	]
G Effects on/off	G
Engine noise on/off	N
All noise on/off	Q
Pause on/off	P
Fast time on/off	X
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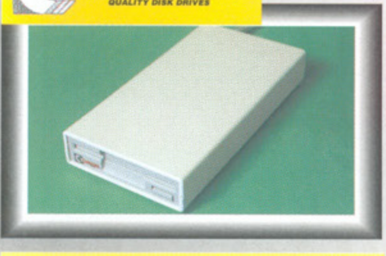


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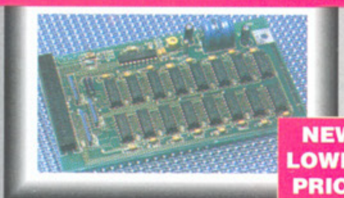
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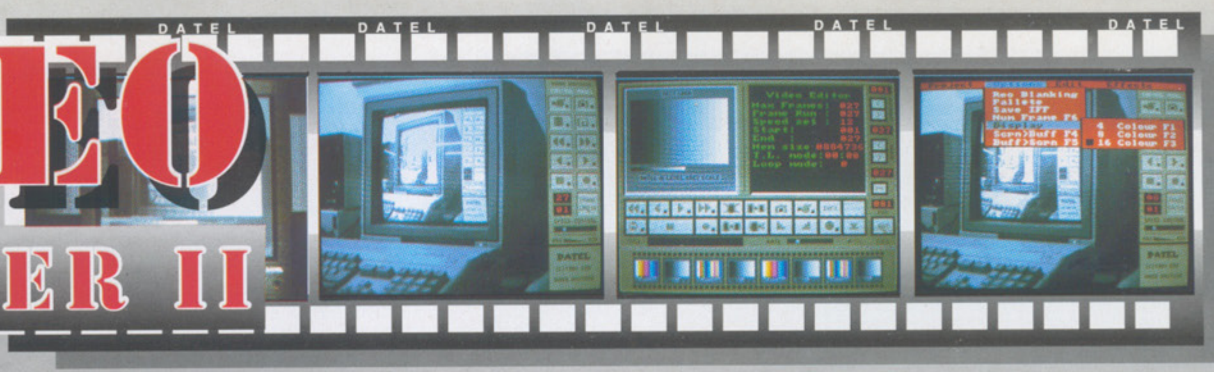
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A/F SCAN

Like art packages, Desktop Video and Presentation packages are almost two-a-penny nowadays. **Asam Ahmad** takes a look at a new version of one of the most popular presentation packages available.

Scala

Presentation System ■ £264
Silica 081-309 1111



AFTER A GOOD reception by the serious Amiga software market, the people behind Scala improved it and have now launched Scala 1.1. Just what the people at Digital Vision have done to Scala isn't instantly obvious, the only obvious at first sight seems to be the top of the main menu screen where it quotes the version number. The update is provided on disk only, there is no manual addendum, instead there is a covering text file on the main disk that contains information on the new features of the program.

Scala is a desktop presentation system. This is a sort of cross between a desktop video package and an information presentation system. A desktop video program is designed for use mainly as a titling system. The way they work is to create pages of scrolling text on a screen overlayed on to a video image. This is done by means of a piece of hardware called a Genlock, which basically combines the two pictures to produce one picture with the computer graphics overlayed on to it.

On the other hand, a presentation system (also referred to as a multimedia system) is all about conveying various bits of information. This information can be in any form, be it music, text or graphics (the multiple formats for media). Scala combines aspects of both these two types of program, and allows you to produce screens packed with information, but with the facility to control these pages as you would titles on a film, providing the user the option to fade things on and off the screen.

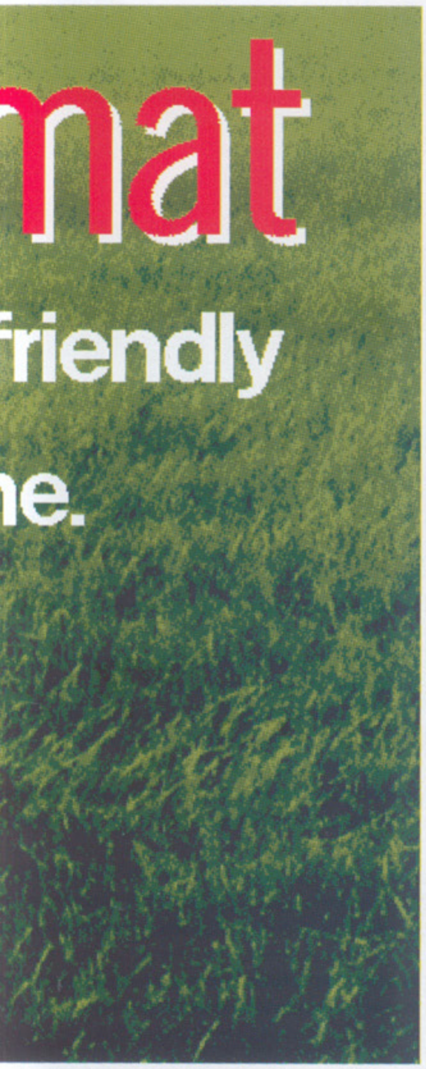
Functionally the program is identical to version 1.0. What has changed however are more subtle things. It's not so much that new features have been added, but there are now extensions to already existing facilities. For example, Scala now supports anti-aliased fonts. This isn't a new font format, but means that Scala can apply smoothing routines to any Amiga font to produce good-looking screen fonts without the 'jaggies'. Perhaps a more exciting addition is the support for rescaleable fonts under Workbench 2. This means that any outline font can be used to create any point size on the fly, for Scala to use as a normal font. As an added bonus, Scala now supports fonts in the ever popular ColorFont format, such as the Kara font series, to produce some excellent looking text on screen.

Scala itself comes with 17 high-quality fonts in various point sizes. These are actually normal Amiga bitmap format fonts, and theoretically can be used in any package that uses Amiga fonts. Scala takes these fonts to produce quality screen fonts and by using its anti-aliasing function, with results rivalling a professional titling system easily obtainable. Also included in the package are a number of backgrounds, to place your text and symbols upon, rather than on a plain single colour screen. These backgrounds are high-quality pictures, mainly of various arbitrary objects, such as water, sky, grass, stones etc, grouped into individual categories for easy access. Another useful inclusion is a set of small pictograms, varying from small symbols of things like Ladies and Gents toilet signs, small cars or trucks, general miscellaneous things, and a full set of arrows pointing in all of the standard 8 joystick directions.

One of the main niggles that was apparent in version 1.0 was the fact that you couldn't scroll text off a screen, like titles at the end of a television program. This has been rectified now, with new transition wipes which can go up or down the screen, designed for this purpose. All the effects are fully configurable so that individual screens can have different wipes assigned to them, and even the individual bits of text on the page can have transition wipes assigned to them so that they flow on to the page in an interesting manner.

Other changes relate more to the working of the program, such as a new buffering system for ANIMs (standard IFF animation files) to provide a smoother end presentation. The loading and playing routines have also been optimised, so that data loads quickly, and is played smoothly at a good continuous speed. Even using loads of ColorFonts in hi-res on a 16-colour screen with multiple symbols (in Scala, symbols refer to various items such as *DPaint*-style brushes) and transition fades don't seem to overly burden the computer. But then this is how it should be when you consider that the minimum basic set-up is an Amiga with 1Mb chip RAM, 1Mb fast and at least two drives or a hard drive.

Not all the criticisms have been answered though. Scala is designed to be a presentation system, and some sort of audio facility should have been included, to make the package more of a complete presentation tool. Some kind of music player would have been nice. The



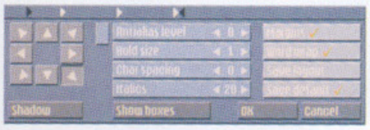
Amiga is a multi-tasking machine, and Scala is good in this respect, obeying most multi-tasking rules, so it is quite feasible to have a piece of music running in the background, being played by a module player program as an alternative. Maybe the next version will have audio facilities built in...

With all these changes, Scala has become a more powerful tool to use for making multimedia presentations or whatever. This is not to say it's perfect though - no program is perfect. The improvements that have been made were definitely necessary, and have made the program better. Scala is one of those innovative products that has so many uses, but more importantly is so easy to use. Creating outstanding quality and information-packed screens on whatever you want is child's play.

The input interface is an absolutely wonderful piece of programming, fully intuitive. The presentation of the program is excellent, with a straightforward but very powerful control system. The manual is very good too, with a decent tutorial section, but very little technical information. What it does include is information on Scala's script language, VISUAL, that allows you to create presentations without even having to load Scala! All you do is just put it through the supplied *ScalaPlayer* program to create a stand alone disk that can be run on any Amiga with 1Mb Chip RAM.



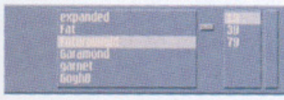
The text input and effects menu. Here you can specify the type style, size and layout, adding effects such as drop shadows and outlines. Extra fonts can also be loaded into Scala.



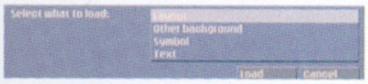
For professional-looking on-screen text, this new version of Scala has a built-in anti-aliasing function, that allows you to display smooth text on screen. Silica will anti-alias any Amiga-compatible bitmap font.



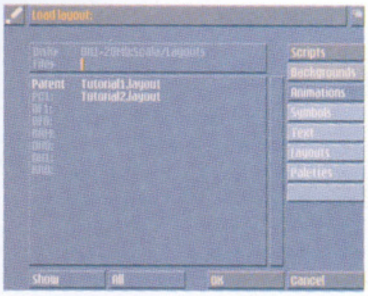
The palette control allows you to change colours individually or in groups. Using the spread function a range of colours can be created by choosing two colours at either end of the range and specifying the number of intermediate colours.



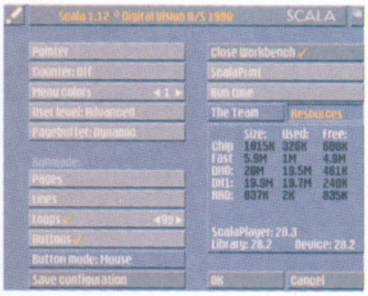
In addition to choosing the font and point size from the font menu, you can also view a sample of each font. In addition to the Amiga bitmap fonts, Scala also supports the popular ColorFont format such as the Kara font series.



In editing mode, some of the menus are replaced by streamlined versions. This load file requester asks you to choose the type of file to be loaded rather than displaying all the files available.



The main file requester. This is used to load all individual items from sounds and graphics to backdrops. To simplify the process the user can specify which file types should be displayed and which ignored. If you have a PC disk reader such as CrossDOS, files from PC disks can be accessed within Scala from this menu.



The main Scala control panel. This is where all the options that effect the whole of a single presentation are made. The type of run mode, input device and various display options are all set from this menu. The panel on the right shows chip mem, fast me, hard disk and currently-mounted floppy disk usage and space.

Creating a page in Scala is a relatively straight-forward process. The first thing to do is select 'New' from the main menu. This brings up a selector asking you to select a background for your picture. Any standard IFF picture can be loaded, including HAM. Alternatively, a blank single-colour background of any resolution can be chosen. This is useful for titling purposes, as Genlocks blank out a particular colour on the screen to let the video image be seen behind the computer graphics.

The next stage involves putting the text on to the page. This is a very easy process. All you do is click on the screen where you want the text and just type. The text is treated as a whole line, so if you want to italicise a word, the whole line is affected. There is a way around this, and that is to create a whole new line just for the particular word or phrase you want to change attributes for, and then moving that line back into the rest of the text. Once you have put all your text on the page, it's time to work out how the text is actually going to appear on the screen. This is done by selecting the line transition wipe menu from the main control panel and selecting the icon that represents the effect you want. The functions of all the icons aren't actually in the manual, but the pictorial representations in the icons are enough to give a general idea of the effect they will have.

You can also choose how the text appears on screen by selecting an icon on a screen transition wipe menu similar to the menu for line transitions. Now the page is complete, it goes on to the run list, ready for presentation. Each of the pages are created in the same way and linked together using the run list.

Scala is one of those programs that is particularly useful for anyone who wants to produce interesting information screens. It can be used for almost any task where a certain amount of information has to be conveyed to another user, and can be used to make interactive presentations and demonstrations. Scala isn't the cheapest package of its kind, cheap but it's perfect for interactive presentations with different mouse-selectable topics.

Scala V1.12

SPEED ●●●●
Superbly fast screen transitions and flow when running. Anti-aliasing is a tad slow.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
A good manual with most of the information that you require.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●●
It's good to read the manual, but using Scala is so easy that you may not need it.

FEATURES ●●●●●
Scala provides you with so many functions you'll probably not use all of them.

VALUE ●●●●
Over 250 quid is a lot of money, but you do get a lot from a very functional program.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **86%**

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Want to make a film with your computer? **Pat McDonald** tells you how with a new product that will allow video production to follow magazines on to the desktop.

ShowMaker



This is an animation strip from *Heimdall,* previewed in the Screenplay section of this issue. When will true Amiga produced films and videos appear?

Video Processor ■ £249.95 ■ Gold Disk

SHOWMAKER 1Mb Chip RAM recommended. Available from Precision 081-330 7166

THE AMIGA'S GRAPHICS capabilities have been called every superlative under the sun. From excellent 24-bit stills to Eric Schwartz's simple, but effective, animations, there's enormous potential in taking those pictures and incorporating them in videos – so called desktop video (DTV).

In the real world things haven't quite worked out that way. Even a 9Mb Amiga can only run a couple of minutes of full-colour moving pictures – most TV programs last 15 at least, calling for extensive editing to get a full length computer generated program.

ShowMaker is set to change all that. If you're interested in video then this program represents the biggest jump in DTV potential since the home video-tape recorder (VTR) was launched on an unsuspecting public. It's big – we're talking Continental scale here.

***ShowMaker* will only** work with a hard drive. Sorry floppy users, but this program needs lots of space and speed to work properly. The first job is to stick the program onto your hard drive, and if you follow two paragraphs or so in the manual you can't go wrong.

The program works by loading in set sequences of animations, stills and music according to your wishes. By using a simple system of point and click you can sequence together whole productions, vastly larger than the Amiga's memory can handle at one go. The output can go straight onto a VCR, with no normal video editing needed at all.

The theory is pretty simple. *ShowMaker* works out how fast your hard drive and processor are, and then works out when it needs to load information from the hard drive, in order to play it at a given time. Once a given sequence of music or graphics (an event) has finished, *ShowMaker* clears all the memory used and starts on the next piece. It's called Dynamic Preload, and this is the only program that has this feature.

The bad news is that *ShowMaker* runs in interlace, making it tricky to use on a standard monitor and an eyesore if used with a TV. Luckily, the important parts of the program are displayed using a largish font, improving its appeal slightly to the average user.

Using *ShowMaker* is a bit like doing a jigsaw with no odd edges. On your hard disk are lots of pictures and sounds, and you can arrange them to play in a sequence. Now, *ShowMaker* can only show one graphic image at a time. However, you can flip between different graphic events on the frame.

In English, this means you can seamlessly join together animations and still frames, with no glitches at all. It doesn't matter what resolution or how many colours they use (it can even display DCTV 24-bit animations, although this isn't available in the UK yet). So you could start with a black-and-white animation, switch to a 4,096 colour HAM animation, do a bit of extra half brite and so on.

How about sound? Well, you can play samples on any of the Amiga's four sound channels. They can be in any of the standard formats – raw binary and single/multi-octave IFF. After you've selected them you can change the sample rate and loop them too. There's a volume event channel to let you swell or mute the volume on cue.

If you prefer, you can use SMUS (Simple MUsical Score) files for your soundtracks. This is used by the *Aegis Sonix* program, amongst others, so you can play songs either with the Amiga's internal sound hardware, or output the song to a MIDI instrument.

Anyone for MIDI? Yes, you can also use MIDI song files for the acoustic accompaniment. If you want to send some oddball MIDI command files, you can use those too – and when you send them is entirely up to you.

Timing, that's the key to video production – getting all the video frames to display at the right time. *ShowMaker's* timing restraints are

PROFESSIONAL USAGE

All right, there are a couple of problems with using *ShowMaker* on a standard, unaccelerated Amiga. Very graphics intensive animations (like 16 colour interlaced overscan, or similar memory intensive formats) can't be used at full frame rate without SMPTE/MTC equipment.

Putting a decent accelerator card (68030 at 33 MHz) really improves the situation enormously. This is the beauty of *ShowMaker* – you can use it for home DTV, learning how it all works on the VTR in your front room, or in a real video studio.

People who are lucky enough to own number-crunching Amigas and who already use them for video work will really get into *ShowMaker.* Most video production equipment in a similar price bracket to this product is fairly dumb – you have to sit down and do all the editing by hand, which makes it very difficult to correct mistakes later on.

On an A3000, ShowMaker is transformed. The faster memory and processor help enormously, and the large in-built hard drive, the flicker fixer, and Workbench 2 contribute to make ShowMaker a truly amazing tool. Oh yes, and it's got a simple ARexx port as well, which means it can be controlled from within ARexx macros along with other programs.

PRICE JUSTIFIED

ShowMaker does cost £250, which may seem exorbitant to your average PD buyer. If you look at it from Gold Disk's point of view, it's really worth this. Remember, it needs a hard drive, which are still not in common usage on the Amiga. So they can't expect to sell many copies of the program at first.

As with most software, *ShowMaker* will probably be discounted by many suppliers in a year or so. In a year's time, the PAL Video Toaster, and possibly PAL DCTV, will be available to boost *ShowMaker* even more. As it stands though, *ShowMaker* is the DTV program – it makes editing video productions so simple it's unbelievable.



really all you'll ever need. For a start, it will run along quite happily using the machine's internal clock, giving the basic 50HZ so beloved of the video industry. There's always a display for the duration of the production in minutes, seconds and frames.

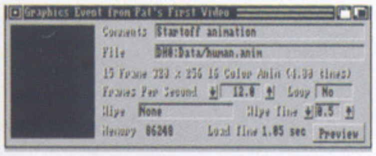
The actual reference you have to time is variable. You can view a video production using five-second increments, one second increments or frame increments (confusingly labelled as 60ths, because it's an American program. Don't worry, it's really frame-by-frame reference on any Amiga).

Alternatively, you can switch to musical notation. This helps when trying to synchronise a graphic event with a particular beat or stab of music. The frame references for music are beats, measures, quarter measures and eighth measures, giving a wide enough range for all but the fastest-speed metal drummers. You can even use the old fashioned MIDI clock for timing purposes.

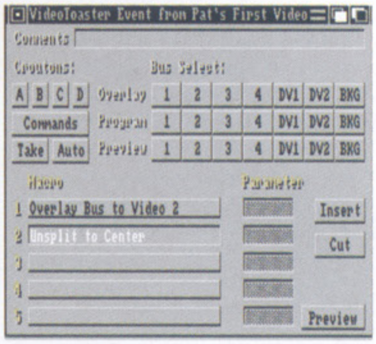
For the upmarket user there's SMPTE. Years ago, the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers worked out a standard way of recording a synchronisation track onto the audio part of a video tape, to keep two VTRs perfectly in time. To use it properly though, you'll need a SMPTE-MTC (Midi Time Code) convertor placed between the VTR and you're Amiga, connected via a normal MIDI interface. This gives perfect frame-by-frame rendering of your production – as good as Sympatica from Artbeat at a fraction of the cost, although Sympatica can do more with 24-bit images.



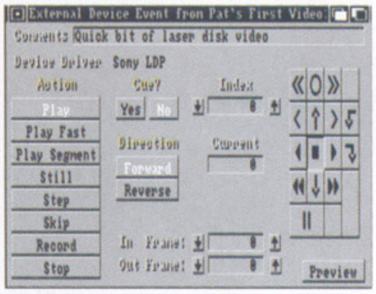
This is the main editing window of *ShowMaker*. Just click in the relevant track (here an animation is being added to last just 10 seconds).



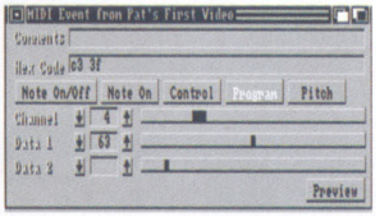
Once an event has been selected, you're prompted with a file requester to choose which graphic you want from your hard disk. Then a data window appears, showing details of it – notice the loop button, to keep repeating the event until it finishes on the time line. Change the event by clicking in the file box – the file requester pops up again – easy.



The Toaster control panel gives you full control over the different video buses and which crouton (video wipe) to use. It's a shame that there isn't a PAL Video Toaster yet, but when there is *ShowMaker* will be able to make full use of it.



Professional users will find the external control mode very handy. The controls for external VTRs and video laser disk players are simple to use with a mouse, but if you look closely you'll notice that they are mapped onto the numeric keypad, so you can use the computer's keyboard. A shame there's no keyboard overlay.



If you want to setup a MIDI command file, to send lots of hex codes to a MIDI instrument, then this panel makes it easy to send just the data you want.

You can use *ShowMaker* with any genlock currently available (necessary to record the video output from an Amiga onto a VTR). If you have a SuperGen 2000 genlock, then you can control it through *ShowMaker*, allowing external video images to be instantly switched or gradually faded with Amiga graphics.

You can control external video from a camera manually, but *ShowMaker* will let you control video devices from within the program. Want to use a particular set of frames reversed from a video laser disk? No problem.

This is the feature that will delight video professionals. Throw away your editing desk and use *ShowMaker* to control all the VTRs through the serial port. The main snag with this is that different manufacturers use different systems for this sort of thing.

Gold Disk have released a few drivers for the more common serial connection (Panasonic, Pioneer CLV and CAV, etc) and promise to update this to cover all serial video interfaces. This sort of facility makes the Amiga much, much more useful for DTV.

The other, less serious snag is if you're using the serial port for a MIDI interface, then you have to buy another board with more serial ports on it – these are a bit rare in this country, but Commodore and GVP do make them. These are only available for the A2000/A1500 at present (I think), but I believe that A500 variants will appear.

Finally, *ShowMaker* will control a Video Toaster card directly. Although not available in this country until next year, this digital effects card transforms the Amiga into a veritable video workstation. Gold Disk don't recommend fitting a Video Toaster into the Amiga running ShowMaker though – because it won't be able to synchronise graphic events or sound properly. Instead, you can control a slave Amiga with a Toaster through yet another serial port. That way you retain overall control of a video production while still being able to use the Toaster. Neat.

Ladies and gentlemen, *ShowMaker* has just launched the DTV revolution. In the Nineties this program and the Amiga can do for video what the Macintosh did for newspaper and magazine publishing in the Eighties. AF

ShowMaker

SPEED ●●●●
Quite usable on a standard Amiga.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●●
A brilliant manual, well written and easy to follow, no waffle.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●●
Excellent interface – makes editing productions very easy.

FEATURES ●●●●●
Little direct 24-bit support, but you can work around this.

VALUE ●●●●
It costs quite a slice, but there's nothing that touches it.

AMIGA GOLD FORMAT **92%**

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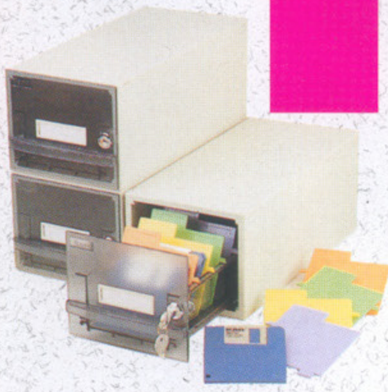
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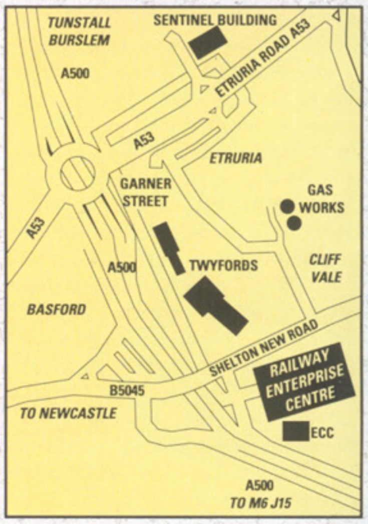
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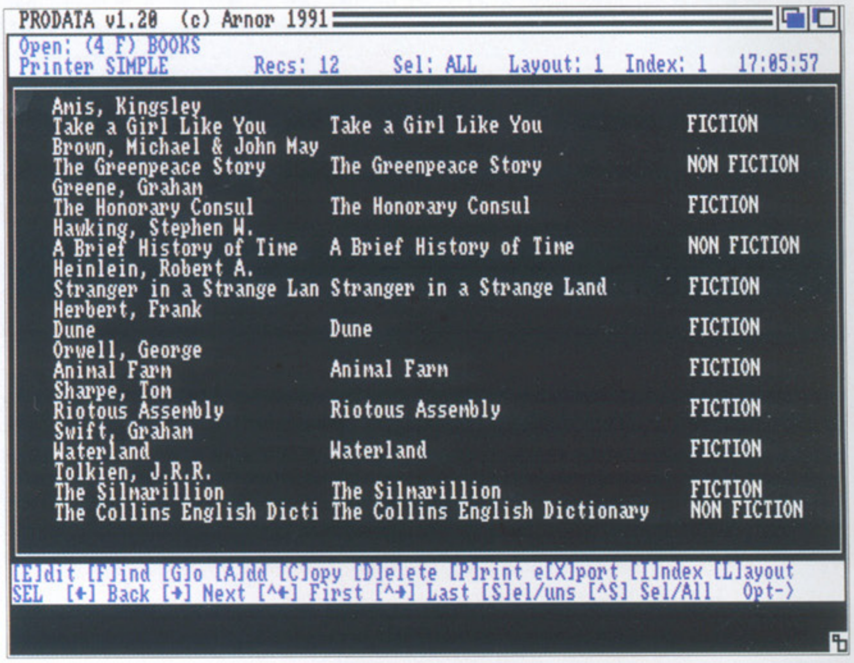
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OVERNMENT, TRADE AND EDUCATIONAL ORDERS WELCOME

If you want to set up a database on your Amiga there's plenty of options, **Pat McDonald** though, highlights an update which is quick and easy to use.

Prodata 1.2

Database ■ Arnor ■ £99.88



If you want, you can view a whole database on one screen, or as much of it as will fit. This does produce a somewhat cluttered display, but it can be useful to see if there are any replicated records – you only need for each piece of data, so excess ones are a waste of memory.

THE AMIGA HAS never been short of databases – there must be a dozen at the very least. Given that they are the most common type of business software currently in existence that's not really surprising, but can the latest incarnation of *Prodata* go any further?

The answer is yes and no. The original version had no support for the mouse, and lacked graphics of any kind. It needed serious keyboard pounding to get the information in, but that's not unusual. No, the real problem was that it was a bit of a pain to learn how to use.

Thankfully this problem has been rectified. *Prodata 1.2* has a full set of pull-down menus, to make the learning curve more gentle. All the keyboard combinations are still there, but you can use the mouse to find them, rather than searching through the manual.

There are three excellent tutorials. These guide you through making a simple name and address database to using, processing and sorting all alphanumeric (words and numbers) data. It's really good, though it takes a bit of rereading to understand what it's talking about.

Prodata is extremely fast, mainly because it stores databases within the computer's memory (1Mb needed). Normally, this means you're restricted in terms of database size, if only because a computer's memory can only be so big. Arnor have written the program to be as efficient as possible – it compresses data and uses minimum memory. In short, you're unlikely to have to split an oversized database into two or more smaller pieces.

Once you've designed a database (given it so many fields per record, what each field is called and so on) it's a cinch to design a layout for it. This is a template to arrange the database to look as professional as possible. Layouts can have horizontal and vertical lines drawn on them, to boost presentation and readability. They can also be password protected.

Most database programs can import data from other database programs, and *Prodata* falls short here. It can import ASCII databases, but there is no facility for loading files from industry big names like *Lotus 1-2-3* or *Excel*. However, as all of these programs can save databases in ASCII format it's not a problem.

One important fact to consider is that Prodata can only store and process alphanumeric data. This means that if you want to make a database of, say your record collection, and include a picture of the cover and maybe a sound sample from it, *Prodata* is not for you.

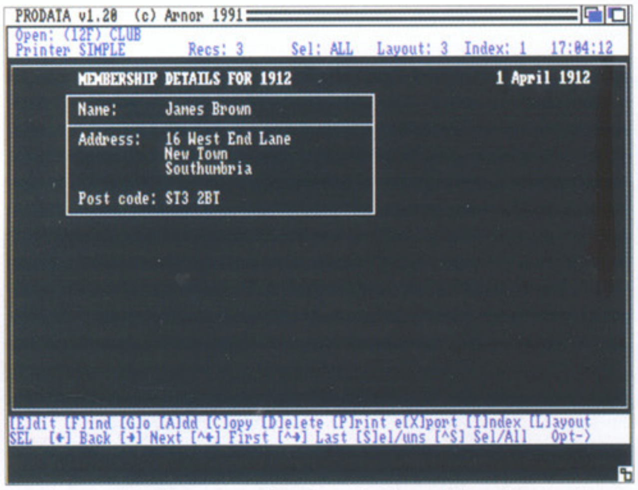
As you input data, you can set verification on it. This can save many an embarrassing typing error, for instance when a value of 999 is entered for somebody's age. Verification is a bit tricky to set up the first time, but soon becomes second nature.

Prodata has some powerful sorting and selecting functions. You can input logical filters (Smith AND Jones NOT Brown). These filtering options are extremely good, comparable to databases costing three or four times as much. When you want to get some statistics from a database, *Prodata* really scores.

The program does have simple facilities for arithmetic operations on numeric data, which roughly translated means it can handle simple tasks like VAT calculations or work payrolls. The more ambitious among you can nest such operations for more complex maths, like working out the average height of people. *Prodata* can cope quite happily with a wealth of arithmetic operations.

Prodata 1.2 is a really fine database. It doesn't have loads of fancy graphic options, just simplicity and plenty of on-screen help to give you some clue as to what you have to do next. I find it extremely capable – and the fact that it belts along at about Mach 3 impresses me even more.

PRODATA 1.2 is available from Arnor 0733 68909



A good way of looking at a database is to simply scroll down it using the up-and-down cursor keys. You can fit more records onto the same screen without making it look too messy – it's also handy for checking erratic spaces or tabs within records.

ALL GREEK?

If you're having difficulty in just what a database is, contrast a computer database with a normal card index. A whole set of cards would be a complete database in itself. Each card represents a record – an individual list of separate information.

On each record there are a number of fields. Consider a database listing, say, a book collection. There would be a field for the author, the title, the publisher and other information like the price or ISBN, or whether the book is fictional or not.

It's easy enough to do this with a card system, but with a database program like *Prodata* you can do much more. Say you wanted a list of all the books by a single author – if the card index is sorted by the name of the author, it's easy enough.

What happens if you want a list of all the novels written by a certain author and published by a particular publisher? It's serious card-sorting time, but *Prodata* can do this in a matter of seconds. If you want to completely rearrange the order of records (by title order say) then you have to take all the cards out the box and start sorting. *Prodata* lets you do all that at the touch of a button.

Prodata 1.2

SPEED ●●●●●
Very fast, in fact the fastest database I've seen, come to think of it.

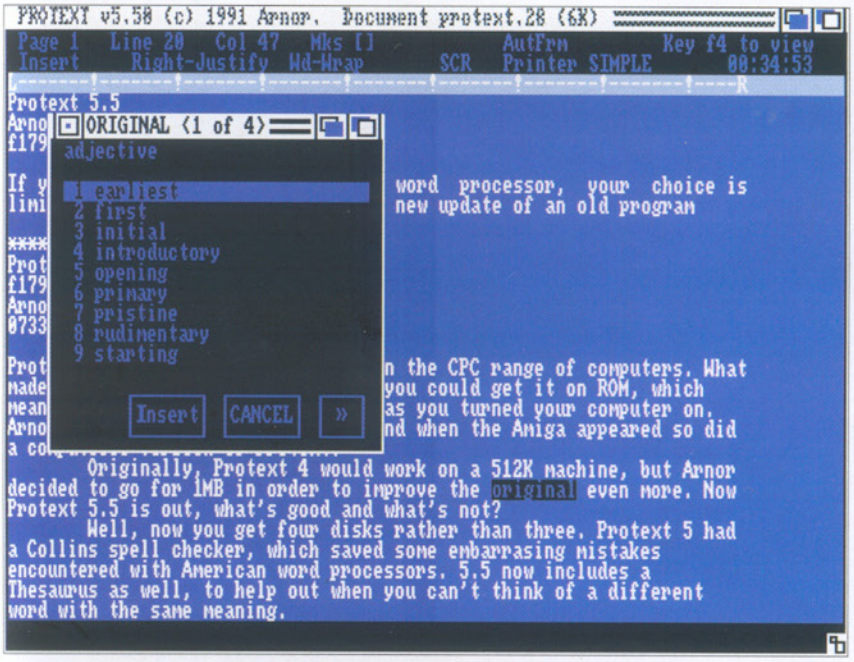
DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Comprehensive, but you have to gradually digest it all.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●
Really easy to get along with – more than enough on-screen prompts.

FEATURES ●●●●
Very powerful filtering and selection routines. Designing a layout for it is simple.

VALUE ●●●●●
It's a real bargain, considering what you can do with it. Cheaper than the competition.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **82%**



There are plenty American word processors, but if you're looking for a British one, your choice is limited. **Pat McDonald** investigates a new update of an old program.

Protext 5.5

Word Processor ■ Arnor ■ £179.48

Using the thesaurus is similar to moving text – just highlight the word you want to cross reference, select Thesaurus from the menu and lots of alternatives are displayed, assuming that Protext already has a cross reference for the word.

PROTEXT 5.5 is available from Arnor 0733 68909

PROTEXT STARTED OUT many moons ago on the CPC range of computers. What made it so successful was the fact that you could get it on ROM (Read Only Memory), which meant that you could use it as soon as you turned your computer on. Arnor wisely invested the profits, and when the Amiga appeared on the scene so did a compatible version of *Protext*.

Originally, *Protext 4* would work on a 512K machine, but Arnor decided to go for 1Mb in order to improve the original even more. Now that *Protext 5.5* is out, what's good and what's not?

Well first of all, now you get four disks rather than three. *Protext 5* had a Collins spelling checker, which saved some rather embarrassing mistakes encountered with American word processors. Version 5.5 now includes a thesaurus as well, to help out when you just can't think of a different word with the same meaning.

As usual, Arnor bundle their own set of printer drivers with the product, rather than just using the standard AmigaDOS ones. They really are brilliant, although you still have to use Preferences to select between serial and parallel printers.

The cornerstone of *Protext* has always been its speed. This program doesn't have on-line help or lots of requester boxes – most options are used with the keyboard. There's even a CLI-like command mode for quick loading and saving. Mind you there is the usual set of pull-down menus for learning how to use the program.

If this is the very first word processor that you've ever used then you might have a few problems, especially if you are used to very programs that are very user-friendly. The manual does help to an extent, but as usual it's thick and a bit unwieldy – it really does take a while to get right into the nitty gritty detail. Just typing, loading and saving are easy enough, but it can take quite some time to learn how to, for example, view two documents at the same time.

What doesn't help is that the manual refers to version 5, with a separate booklet detailing the changes in 5.5. It can be very disconcerting to ask for a word count, and be given it plus a diagnostic of the whole piece: page length, character length, average number of characters per word and per sentence – who needs this?

Well, it can help actually. If you can analyse the way you're writing now, and compare it with the way you should be writing, then you can learn. I've got to admit that I've learned quite a lot about my style using just that feature alone.



What can often confuse people about *Protext* is the command mode. Here, you can save, load and merge programs, check directories and so on. It's a bit like using the Shell, except that it's more restricted – it's really just to let you work faster if you want.

ALTERNATIVELY...

Here at *Amiga Format* we use *Protext* extensively for writing copy to go into the magazine, primarily because it's fast but also because it's got a British spelling checker. However, we don't use it to layout the magazine – *Protext* doesn't let you include pictures with your text.

If you are interested in a program for that purpose, then Wordworth might be a better bet. Featuring the same English dictionary and a very user-friendly interface, Wordworth is much better for word publishing: the no-man's land between desktop publishing and word processing. Although not as fast as *Protext*, *Wordworth* costs £130 and is available from Digita International (0395 270273).

What else? When you are formatting text, *Protext 5.5* can intelligently introduce hyphens. So when an word overruns from one line to the next, the program works out exactly where to put the hyphen. That's very, very smart for a word processor – with most of them you have to read through the text and make sure that it's correct, but I found I could put my trust in *Protext 5.5*.

Similarly, it can deal with the problem of 'widows' and 'orphans' – these are short lines of text at the beginning or end of paragraphs which overrun the page. Again, a very useful automatic feature, although you can turn it off if you don't want it. Blank lines at the top of pages can similarly be suppressed.

The Collins Thesaurus is very good, if a bit slow when used from a floppy. Just highlight the word you want using the mouse, and the program will tell you the grammar of the word and a few alternatives. Assuming that it can recognise it, of course.

There is a mailmerge option – indeed it has to my knowledge one of the most powerful mailmerge facilities to be found on a word processor. It can even mail merge from *Prodata* database files, which is handy if you use Prodata to keep records of all your mailshot addresses.

There isn't a great deal in this version that is radically different from *Protext 5*, but then again the upgrade is very noticeable in terms of the final presentation of your documents. *Protext 5.5* can save you a lot of time and effort when finally checking through a document, and for this reason I thoroughly recommend it.

Product Name

SPEED ●●●●●
A sleep icon sometimes appears for a fraction of a second.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Very thorough if a bit spaced out across three different manuals.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●
This is a little shocking just because of the sheer scale of it.

FEATURES ●●●●
No good for word publishing because you can't include IFF pictures with your text.

VALUE ●●●●
A little expensive, but probably worth it in the long run.

AMIGA GOLD FORMAT **90%**

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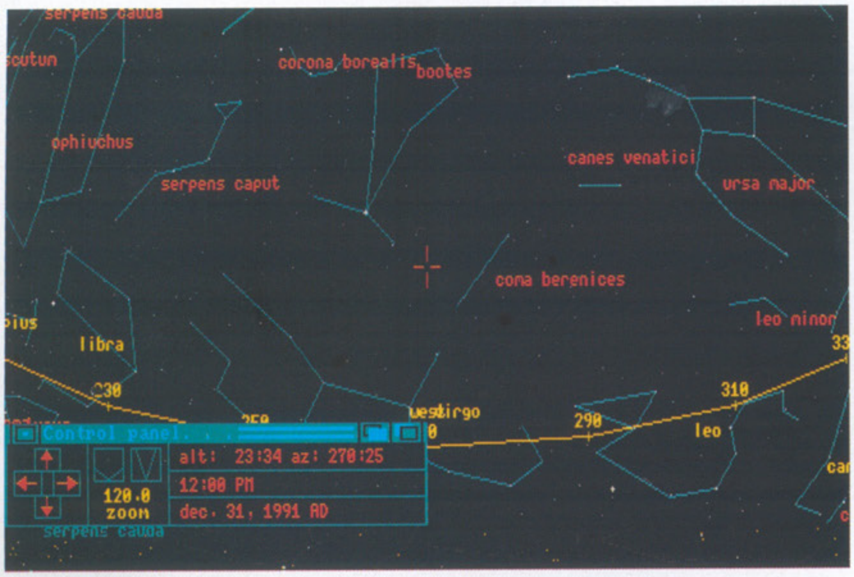
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If you go outside at midnight this New Years' Eve and look due West, this is what you'll see (although the constellations won't be named and so clearly marked.

Space is big. Really big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the street to the Chemist, but that's just peanuts to space. **Paul Lyons** gazes at the new version of Distant Suns and goes all cosmic, man...

Distant Suns

Astronomy ■ £69.95 ■ HB Marketing 0753.686 000

THERE IS LITTLE in this world that holds as strong a fascination for Man as space. As far back as we know people have looked to the stars for both physical and spiritual guidance and the motions of the stars.

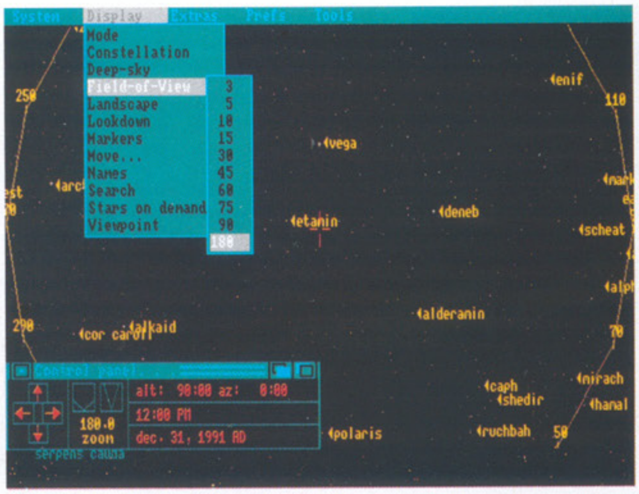
The problem for keen star-watchers today is that very few communities have their own priests of star-lore and learning about something which is constantly changing from a book is not always that easy. Which is where Distant Suns comes in.

Distant Suns' creator Mike Smithwick describes it as a telescope and a time machine combined. The program allows you to stand anywhere on the planet (and other places in the solar system) at anytime in history. So where would you like to go? How about looking at the sky Columbus saw the night before he set off to 'discover' America? The heavens above Bethlehem at the time of Christ? The sky of the astronomers of the ancient Egyptian courts?

Although all this is fun, Distant Suns has much greater relevance that just placing you under historic skys. The program is very accurate and will display star maps of the heavens with a vast amount of data. There are over dozens different variables that can be displayed on screen. Constellation outlines, and names, star names, magnitudes, class and large amounts of data that probably mean something important to astronomers. Obviously, displaying all the data at once will make the map unreadable, but it's all there. From a visual point of view one of the nicest parts about Distant Suns is the users ability to change how you wish to look at the sky: as a constellation map, a humans' eye view from the earth, or a strongly magnified view (to a viewing angle of as little as three degrees). For the really technically-minded such things as star precession and stellar occultation can be observed and ephemeris tables can be plotted – you can even put your own satellites, comets and even planets into solar orbit and track them.



Now lay down and look up at the sky, this is what you'll see. The blue lines are the constellations – names in red. The yellow line is the horizon. If you really wanted to know the SAO id of the right-hand star in cephus, you can.



Now suppose you had a telescope woth you, and you wanted to see a more detailed picture of the sky around Vega. Just go the the Field of View option and zoom in to as little as three degrees.

For really freaky effects you can generate animations of the movement of the heavens over years or even centuries, or perhaps fly from Pluto, round the sun and back, or... You get a lot of options with Distant Suns. Apparently the program has virtually re-written from version 3 and it does show. The interface is cleaner, the data better presented and the amount of data vastly increased. Users of Distant Suns v3 can get an upgrade from HB Marketing.

Distant Suns is filled with nice touches that make its exploration a real pleasure. Ask the program for data on a star and not only does it give you its name, position, distance, magnitude, class and blue magnitude, but also a short comment on the star – '...the Greeks called it Cithara, the Babylonians named in Dilran and to the...'. There's also a menu option called What's Up? that gives you data on what's happening in the sky that night: where the planets and constellations will be, when the next meteor shower is and so on. The only real downer is that you can't print out star maps or interesting details such as the What's Up? panel

Lots of quirky little programs appear in the Amiga Format offices and most appeal to only to the enthusiast in that field. However Distant Suns is such a polished, well-executed and featured-packed package that it turned the heads of almost everyone. I certainly want my own copy – what better recommendation can there be? AF

Distant Suns v4

SPEED ●●●
Distant Suns main drawback. Screen refreshes and data access are pretty slow.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Very good, the manual covers not only the program's use, but astronomy and bits of history.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●
Not the easiest of programs, but there's an excellent Quick Start Card included.

FEATURES ●●●●●
The amount of information packed onto three disks is incredible, the options list immense.

VALUE ●●●●
At 70 quid, it's not going to be on everyone's best buy list, but for stargazers, it's essential.

AMIGA Verdict FORMAT **84%**

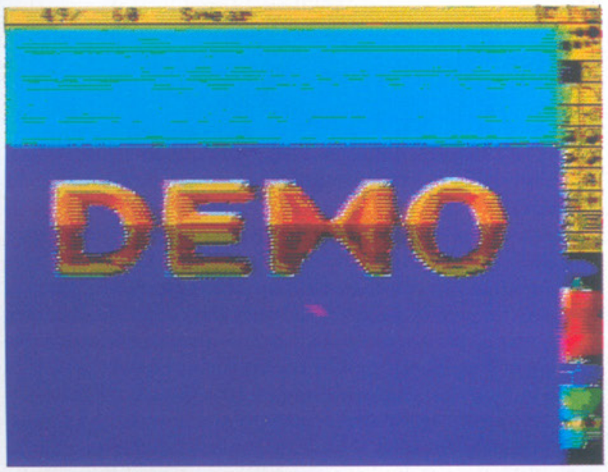
DPaint III Tutorial Videos

Even a good manual cannot always teach you good technique- that has to be learned another way - and what better way to demonstrate an art package than visually, on video. In an effort to better himself, **Asam Ahmad** looks at two videos aimed towards teaching DPaint III users a thing or two.

The Tutor

Audition Computer Services

■ 0780 55888 ■ £17.99



DPaintIII: The Tutor shows you how to use all the tools presented to you in a very thorough manner, although in many cases this is to overkill. This screen shows some basic effects in action...

This tutorial video is designed more as a manual replacement than anything else. It is a well structured video, divided into several different sections, covering all aspects of DPaintIII. It is narrated by a woman controlling the computer who speaks in an informative (if occasionally tedious) manner.

The first section is a basic overview of DPaintIII. It demonstrates all the different tools available, their variations, and how to use them. The tutor's pace is very good for the first section, although sometimes you'll be reaching for the remote control and hitting that rewind button to try and catch exactly what was said. After that the narration goes full speed ahead but the screen drawing remains at its own leisurely sedate pace making for some rather frustrating viewing when the voice-over is totally out of synchronisation with the screen.

The video refers back to earlier parts of the tutor all the time, so even if you are a more experienced user, you have to watch the whole video from the beginning to make any sense of the later parts. This is not as bad as it sounds, as the first section will probably show you something about the basic tools that you didn't know anyway.

The video works well and it's an admirab attempt at providing alternative learning media for people that hate manuals. It's packed with information, and is bound to teach a couple of new tricks to even the hardest DPaintIII veteran. Sadly, the presentation is not up to the quality of the information and the video becomes monotonous and less compelling the further along the line you go, though the interest level picks up on the more complex sections. Sometimes the video will dwell on some of the easier to understand features, and then fly through the more complex and necessary points, but then what else is a remote control for? At £17.99, the video is a bit expensive, but although it can get a little boring it's still better than a manual, for demonstrating technique, and easier to understand in most places.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 71%

The Complete Presentation Tool

Video One ■ 041 552 7865 ■ £19.99

Of the two videos, DPaint III: The Complete Presentation Tool, has the more professional approach. It differs from the Tutor video in that it assumes that you are already familiar with the basic functions of the application. The video doesn't demonstrate how to use DPaint III, instead it shows you how to use the tools and features to produce creative, professional quality results suitable for video or film presentations.

The presentation of the video itself is much the same as the Tutor - a DPaintIII screen where all the action takes place accompanied by a voice-over, but thankfully this narrator keeps pace with the screen. It's not as long as the Tutor (only about half the length) but the rate at which information is conveyed to you is a lot faster, and a lot better. This is not to say that it is too fast – it's directed towards the experienced user after all – and you can always rewind to catch the more complex bits. The screen actions are usually very fast as the presentation is on an Amiga 3000, so expect some of those effects to be slower on a standard A500/2000.

It's full of tips on how to create various effects, and the way that you are shown how to do them is excellent. The narrator points out all the things that you need to know, such as the different modes, palettes, all the ranges required to create the effects and everything is explained. This makes it very easy to learn how to do the examples and remember, as you know why things have to be a certain way, not just that they have to. It's not perfect though, as the video shows how to easily perform the effects, but not interactively, and there's little encouragement for you to try it out for yourself.

The narration is very good, you g impression that the man who is demonstrating the video really knows what he's talking about. Keeping up a continuous pace, the video is very easy to watch, and easy to come back to after a break. It's not very structured at all, with just a continuous stream of information, but it does a very good job. £19.99 is not cheap, but for what the video does, it's better value for money than the DPaint III Tutor. Not to be mistaken for a manual replacement, DPaintIII: The Complete Presentation Tool, is an excellent supplement for users intending to put their investment to some serious use.



The Complete Presentation Tool shows you how to use all your basic tools and functions to create effects suitable for use in DeskTop Video presentations or in other situations where professional standard presentation graphics may be required.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 88%

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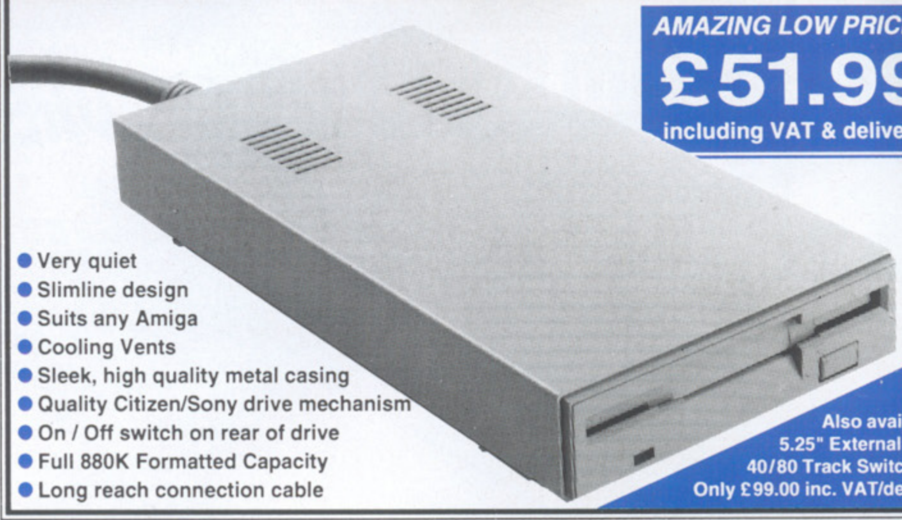
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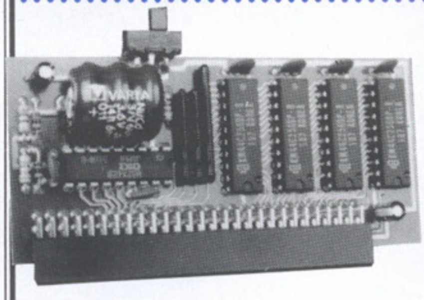


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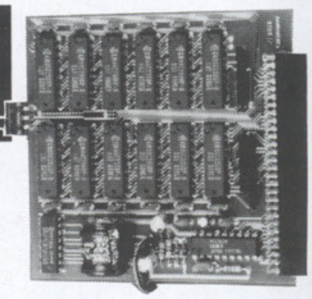
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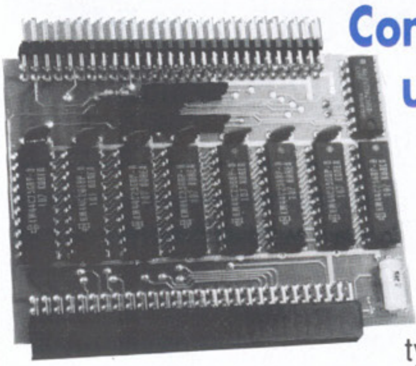


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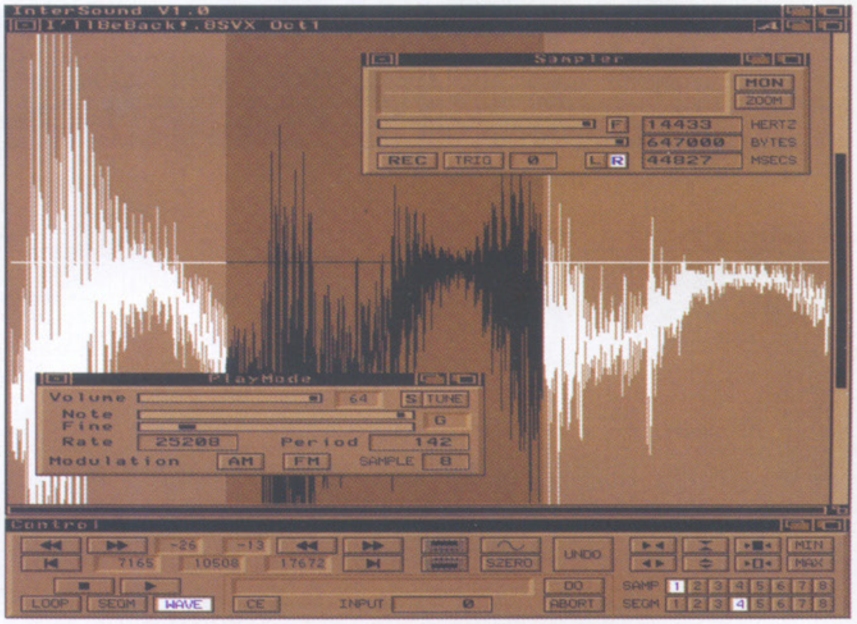
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Hot on the heels of such programs as AudioMaster 3 and Audition 4 comes InterSound, a sample editor for use with most samplers. **Jason Holborn** puts it to the test.



It may look rather pretty, but InterSound is rather lacking in features.

InterSound

Sample Editor ■ £50 ■ InteractiVision

SOUND SAMPLING PACKAGES are as common as muck these days, but it's unusual to find a package that doesn't come with some form of sampling hardware. Those that do exist have to be either very cheap or very good indeed.

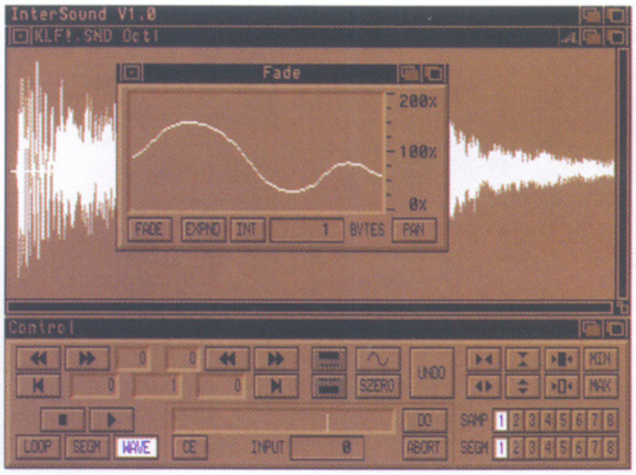
InteractiVision think that its new InterSound package falls into both these catagories, but the competition may be harder to beat than they think. With packages like Aegis's AudioMaster 3 and SunRize's Audition 4 defining the standards of Amiga sampling software, InterSound has to be something pretty special.

InterSound arrives in a rather tacky soft cardboard box containing a single program disk and a manual. The program doesn't come with any form of sampling hardware, so you'll need to invest in a sampler to take full advantage of the program's capabilities. That's not to say that you need a sampler – you could just use InterSound to edit existing sounds – but you'd be missing out on the real fun of grabbing your own samples.

InterSound will work with just about any Amiga sampler that connects to the machine via the parallel port. This rules about samplers such as Datel's ProSampler 2 and the Mimetics unit, but you'll still be able to use something like MasterSound without problems. If you've got a sampler that can handle it, InterSound fully supports stereo sampling, with the main sample display being split into two equal halves.

Surprisingly, the sampling section of InterSound is rather weak, to say the least. For starters, it only allows you to sample into chip RAM, something that is rather lacking on an A500. Even worse is the fact that it only supports sampling rates of upto 29 KHz (the limit of the Amiga's sound hardware). These days, even budget samplers offer the ability to sample to fast RAM with sampling rates of upto 55 KHz, so InterSound is severly flawed in this all-important area.

InterSound's editing facilities are pretty comprehensive. Although not overwhelming in complexity, they can adequately handle the vast majority of sample editing tasks. In true AudioMaster fashion, you can mark a section of sample using the mouse and then carry out any one of a number of editing operations on it including copy and paste, inverse and shift etc.



InterSound's fade control is particularly well implemented. You can apply a sort of LFO envelope to a waveform simply drawing out the envelope with the mouse.

One editing feature which is particularly well handled is InterSound's fade control, which is actually more like a glorified attack/delay/sustain/release control. Simply by drawing out a graphic within the fade requester, InterSound applies the graph to your sample, allowing you to create some quite interesting effects. InterSound's zoom function is also quite interesting, although I'm still not quite convinced by it. All sample zoom functions allow you to zoom in on a sample, but InterSound can zoom in both horizontally and vertically. Vertical zoom allows you to get in closer without losing data from the far left and right hand corners of the screen.

This, unfortunately, is about as far as InterSound goes. There are a couple of other minor editing features, but these are hardly worth writing home about. It would have been nice to have seen some form of sample sequencing built in as standard, especially now that both AudioMaster and Audition support this. A few more editing functions would have been nice too – flanges, filters and echos are only a few that I could mention.

Coming in at £50, InterSound is hardly the cheapest sampling software available, especially when you consider that a complete sampling system like TechnoSound can be picked up for about £15 less. If InterSound was bundled together with a sampler, I could see it doing well. Unfortunately, it just isn't up to the same standards as programs like Audition 4 and AudioMaster 3 to justify spending out £50 for a program that really isn't that much better the software bundled with samplers like AMAS and MasterSound. It's got a few nice features, but these are really nothing more than gimmicks.

Centrsoft
IBD 021 625 3302

InterSound

SPEED ●●●
Editing functions are executed at an acceptable enough speed, although it's nothing special.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
InterSound's manual is very readable. Written in clear english, you're unlikely to get lost.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
The interface looks pretty, but it's sometimes tricky. Take my advice – read the manual first!

FEATURES ●●●
All the usual sample editing facilities are there, but little else.

VALUE ●●●
Considering that Audition 4 is the same price, InterSound isn't such an attractive proposition.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **65%**

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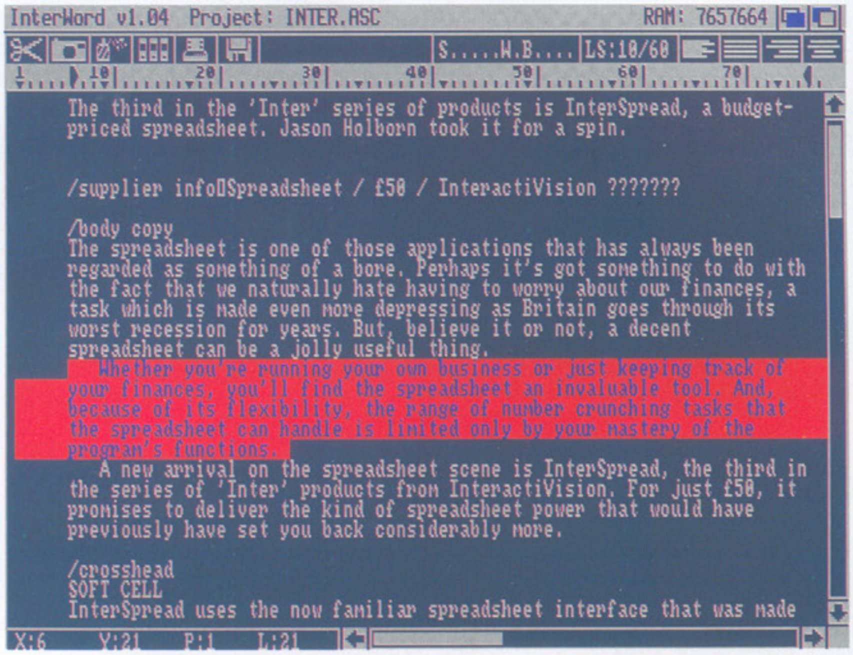
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Jason Holborn takes a look at InterWord, a new budget word processor with an up-market specification.



The speed of InterWord's screen update has to be seen to be believed. Even when working with larger documents, InterWord keeps up impressively.

InterWord

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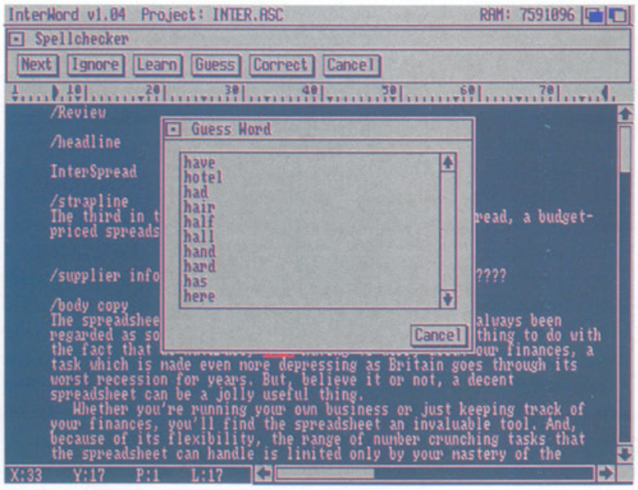
INTERWORD IS THE first in a series of three products from a little known company called InteractiVision. As it's name suggests, it's a word processing program that will allow you to knock up anything from a short letter to a complete book or thesis. Before we go any further, it has to be stressed that InterWord is a straight text processor. Unlike most Amiga word processors these days, it won't allow you to import graphics and use fancy fonts into your documents, so don't buy it if you feel like being extravagant (buy Digita's Wordworth instead!). However, if you need a program that can do a damned fine job of processing words, then InterWord could be for you.

The program arrives on four disks, three of which hold nothing more than some rather large dictionary files used by InterWord's spell checker. The main program disk contains the InterWord program which is set in motion by the usual double click of a mouse button on the program's icon. Once InterWord has loaded, you're presented with a rather dull looking screen that would look more at home on a PC than an Amiga.

Looking around the screen, you'll notice that InterWord has a very business-like appearance. Along the top of the screen are a number of icons which are used for quick access to a few of the more common word processing functions. However, the vast majority of InterWord's operations are accessed via pull down menus or hot keys. Anyone familiar with Intuition should have no problems at all getting to grips with InterWord – it really is that simple to use.

Obviously the first thing you will want to do with your new word processor is write some text. Quite a few Amiga word processors seem to get left behind when you enter text at speed, but InterWord seems to not only keep up, but to encourage you to type still faster. I like to think that I'm a pretty fast typist, but I never managed to outrun InterWord. Even when inserting and deleting words from a long passage, InterWord automatically reformats the paragraph while you work. This would be too much for a program like Excellence!, but InterWord handles the task impressively.

Entering text is ok, but a word processor should also be judged on the power of its editing facilities. Thankfully, InterWord isn't let down in this department – there's the usual selection of tools for cutting, copying and pasting of blocks, plus full search and replace facilities. Extra editing features include soft hyphenation, index generation, left, right, centre and flush justification (all of which are carried out automatically as you type) and alot more besides.



InterWord's spell checker offers both a huge dictionary and rapid operation.

As you'd expect from any word processor worth its salt, InterWord does have a spell checker built in as standard. Spread across three disks, it's certainly pretty big – InteractiVision claim it offers 137,550 words, which is almost double the size of Protext's dictionary. Even with this amount of data to work with, it's surprisingly fast in operation – it's probably faster than Protext in this respect.

If you're the proud owner of InterSpread (InteractiVision's spreadsheet program), you can port data straight into InterWord using a communications port between the two programs. Obviously the two programs need to be running concurrently (thanks to the magic of Amiga multitasking), but you need never know that the link exists until you need to use it. This feature may sound rather limited, but imagine how useful it would be to be able to pull in financial data from a spreadsheet into a letter to your bank manager!

InterWord may not be the ultimate in Amiga word processing, but it's an impressive achievement nonetheless. The Amiga marketplace has been literally screaming out for a decent budget word processor which is fast and easy to use, and InteractiVision have come up with the goods. If you need a powerful text engine but can't quite stretch to Protext, then InterWord is a worthy substitute.

Centrsoft
IBD 021 625 3302

InterWord

SPEED ●●●●
Screen update is very fast with even large chunks of text being reformat almost instantly.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
For a translated manual, it's very good. All of the program's functions are described in detail.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●
Load it up and start typing. InterWord is so easy to use that you really don't need a manual!

FEATURES ●●●
All the usual tools are there including a spell checker. It's a shame that there's nothesaurus.

VALUE ●●●●
£50 is a good price for this level of word processor. If you can't afford Protext, try InterWord.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **85%**

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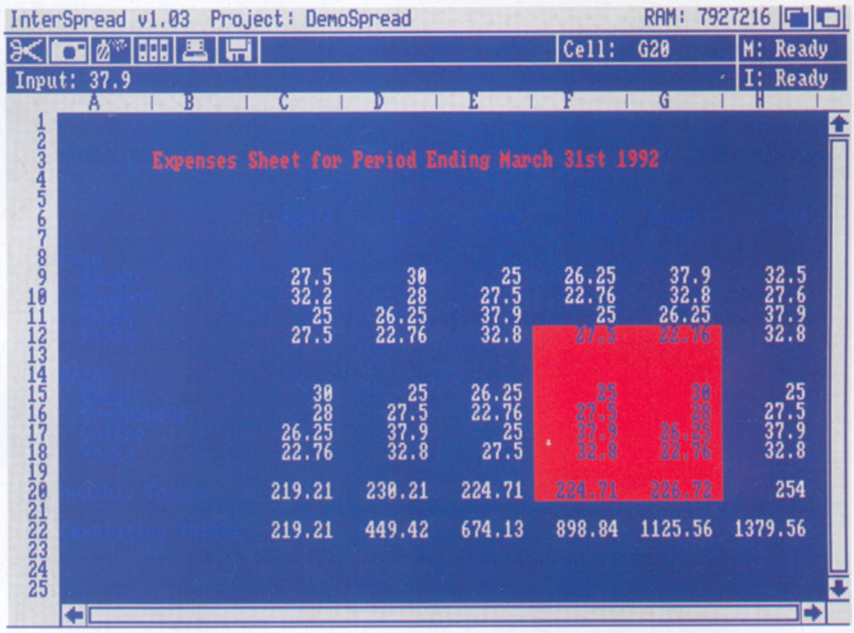
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Access

VISA

The third in the 'Inter' series of products is InterSpread, a budget-priced spreadsheet. **Jason Holborn** took it for a spin.



Ranges of cells can be selected with the mouse.

InterSpread

Spreadsheet ■ £49.95 ■ InteractiVision

THE SPREADSHEET IS one of those applications that has always been regarded as something of a bore. Perhaps it's got something to do with the fact that we naturally hate having to worry about our finances, a task which is made even more depressing as Britain goes through its worst recession for years. But, believe it or not, a decent spreadsheet can be a jolly useful thing.

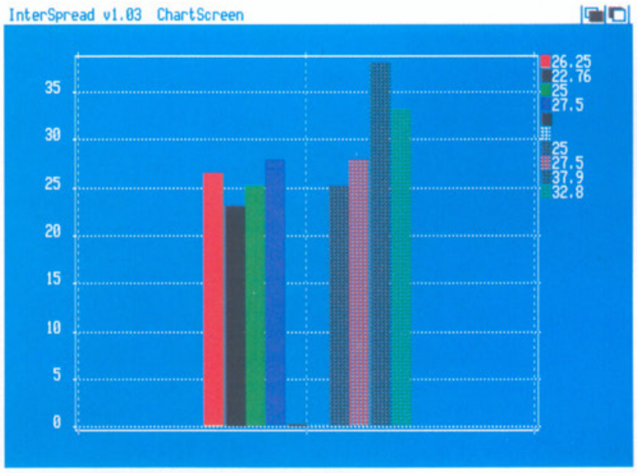
Whether you're running your own business or just keeping track of your finances,a spreadsheet is an invaluable tool. And, because of its flexibility, the range of number crunching tasks that the spreadsheet can handle is limited only by your mastery of the program's functions. InterSpread, is a new arrival on the spreadsheet scene and part of a series of 'Inter' products from InteractiVision. For just under £50, it promises to deliver the kind of spreadsheet power that would have previously have set you back considerably more.

InterSpread uses the now familiar spreadsheet interface that was made famous by such programs as Lotus 1-2-3 and the Amiga's own Advantage. Like all spreadsheets, your 'worksheet' consists of a grid comprising of hundreds of individual 'cells', each of which can be assigned a number, a text string or a formulae. The size of a spreadsheet's 'worksheet' has always been thought of as something of a yard stick, but in reality it's not really that important. Thankfully though, InterSpread is certainly no slouch here – with a maximum grid size of 10000 rows by 3000 columns (that's 30 million cells!), you're hardly going to run out of space.

Entering information into your spreadsheet is simplicity itself. Just select the cell you require using either or mouse or cursor keys, then type away. The program then automatically enters the information into the sheet in the appropriete format. Cells can be edited in the same way, with the existing content of the cell being displayed in the top left hand corner.

A block of cells can also be edited in exactly the same fashion by marking out a range using the mouse. You can then carry out the usual cut, copy and paste operations, just like you would within a word processor like InterWord. If you're carrying out the same editing function over and over again, you can define macros which will allow you to carry out several operations in one go.

Entering spurious amounts of numbers is all very nice, but the joy of a decent spreadsheet is that you need never carry out any calculations yourself. Simply by assigning a formula to a cell that carries out a calculation on other cells, the result of the calculation will be displayed. Even if you then change the value of one of the cells refered to within the formula, InterSpread will recalculate automatically.



InterSpread's graphing functions may not quite be up to the same standards as Advantage, but they do the job well enough.

Centrsoft IBD 021 625 3302

At its simplest level, InterSpread can be set up to add up any number of cells simply by typing '=' (all formulae must start with an equals symbol) and then clicking on each cell in turn. Once you've finished, just press RETURN and the result is displayed. Large blocks of numbers can be added up by dragging out a filled box around the numbers in question. This feature I like – won't allow you to do this.

InterWord isn't just restricted to adding up however. InterWord supports five mathematical operators including expotential involution (to the power of), multiplication, division, subtraction and of course addition. You can mix these to produce some complex formulae.

To make things somewhat more readable, InterSpread supports eight different types of graph ranging from the usual pie chart to line graphs, bar and stacked bar charts etc.

Creating a chart is simplicity itself. All you have to do is mark out a range of numbers to be graphed, select the graph type from the pull down menus and InterSpread does the rest. They're not quite as pretty or as flexible as the graphing functions with programs like Advantage, but they're more than adequate. These graphs can either be printed out or saved in IFF format for use with a word processor or DTP program.

I must admit that I was impressed by InterSpread. It's not quite as fun to use as Gold Disk's Advantage, but if you are after a solid, no nonsense program that gets the job done, then InterSpread is a program worth taking a look at. In all, InteractiVision's InterSpread is a business-like spreadsheet that comes highly recommended.

InterSpread

SPEED ●●●●
Spreadsheet recalculations are carried out at a blisteringly fast pace.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
The manual is a joy to behold, telling you all you need to know to get cracking straight away.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●
Spreadsheets have never been particularly friendly beasts, but InterSpread is the exception.

FEATURES ●●●
The charts facility is a little limited, but the rest of the program more than makes up for this.

VALUE ●●●●
£50 for a spreadsheet with this kind of power is an absolute bargain.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **82%**

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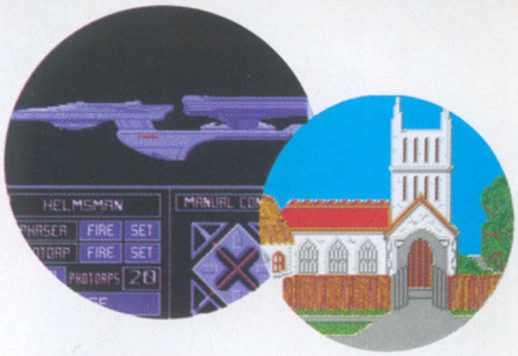
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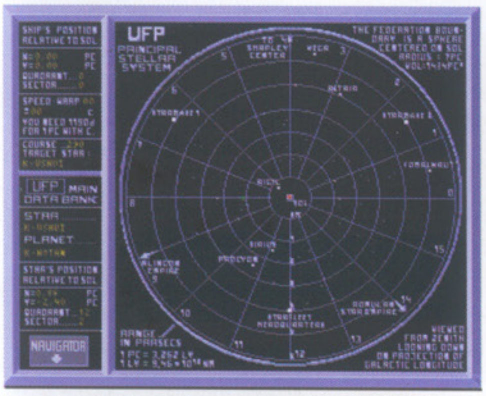
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PD Update



Time to take a dive into That Domain where things are always cheap and cheerful. Find out what are the best selection of games and utilities with **Pat McDonald**.

ALL NEW STAR TREK
PD SOFT 1835



The actual playing area is very large, although the planets are pretty difficult to spot – bad news when you don't know your Altair from your Proxima.

All right, so Tobias Richter's Star Trek game isn't new, but this incarnation is. The original game came on two disks and worked on 1Mb machines only. This one still needs 1Mb, but at least it comes on just one disk – hooray, no swapping!

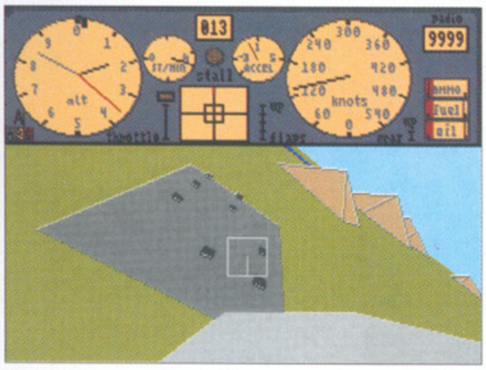
In case you're not familiar with the game, you command the new revitalised USS Enterprise on a five year mission within the Federation. There's a great star map to explore, scientific missions to perform and the occasional Klingon off the starboard bow.

Using the might of the USS Enterprise is challenging without being tech heavy (set the aim point, press the fire-button) and all the original sounds and views are there. The only thing missing is the crew, who for copyright reasons are usually absent from this sort of game. Very absorbing, a must for Trekkies.



The fire-power of the Enterprise is relatively easy to control: set your aiming point and let them have it!

AIR WARRIOR
STRICTLY PD G210



Banking low over some buildings in a B17 gives you all sorts of evil thoughts...

How many PD flight simulators have you ever come across? None. Air Warrior is a different sort of flight simulator, aimed at those who prefer dogfights to final approaches. The planes available range from the lowly World War I Spad to the rather good Super Sabre of the 1950s. Tanks, jeeps and trucks can also be driven around the battle area.

There's more to it than choosing a plane and roaring off the runway. Air Warrior runs in two different modes: practise and online. In practise mode, there are no enemy planes and no dogfights – it's very good for getting flying practise.

To get at the real game you will need a modem. The idea is that you dial a number, and join in a war where all the pilots are human. That's right, in Air Warrior you can have many planes shooting at each other in a very small airspace.

You could easily be forgiven for never having heard of Air Warrior. This game is big in the US, but has never made an impact over here due to various technical problems. Happily these are being sorted out as I write this, and Air Warrior UK should be up and running soon.

Put simply, the company Online (081-558 6114) are setting up a network whereby you pay a subscription to the service and join in the war with other pilots. All right, so you need a modem to do this, but Air Warrior plays very realistically, simply because there are human brains behind your opponents and allies. You can of course chat to other pilots logged onto the system, agree on tactics, etc.

Why is Air Warrior in the Public Domain? Surely it's rubbish? Not at all! To play it properly you will need to log on to the service, and that's where Online get their money. The program isn't quite finished at the time of writing (this disk is pre-release) but Air Warrior looks like it will be huge. See you there!

POM POM
VIRUS FREE PD 1760



Pom Pom is a simple game with nice effects and presentation. It's not easy to hit the larger planes as they fly across the screen very fast.

A very simple, quite pretty game. Pom Pom pits you against the skill and determination of the Imperial Japanese Air Force. All you have to do is move your sights over them with the joystick and introduce them to the concept of being shot by pressing the fire-button.

Visually it's very attractive – there is a different backdrop for the three different battles (Pearl Harbour, Midway and Leyte) and the planes scream on and off the screen very fast. To add a bit of thought to the game, the occasional American plane zooms across: filling these with lead means grief from your commanding officer.

Pom Pom sounds good, looks good, and shows what you can do with a tiny bit of programming combined with quality effects. Donovon L. Reeve (the author) is clearly an American patriot but that doesn't spoil the game.

What does let it down is the 56 lines at the bottom of the screen – because it comes from America, these are filled with garbage. You can either put up with it or use a program like Hacktrick 60Hz to change the display to the stretched, faster NTSC one.

MATH DRILL
17 BIT 1165

Good heavens, an educational program that's not written in AMOS! Whatever next. Math Drill is a fairly simple program for testing children's (or anybody else's) mental arithmetic. Choose from addition, subtraction, multiplication or division and off you go.

Math Drill can be set to test easy or difficult maths. Correct answers are rewarded with a suitably robotic voice saying something patronising. Incorrect results receive the correct answer and the invitation to try again.

Having played around with this program for some considerable time, I can see why AMOS educational

Continued on Page 167

PUBLIC DOMAIN

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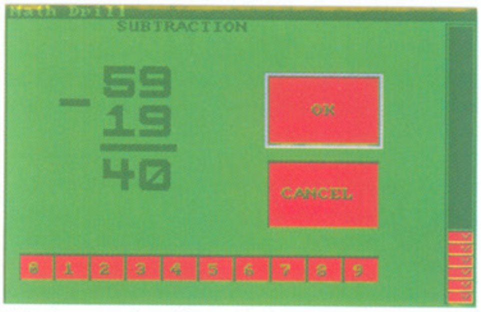
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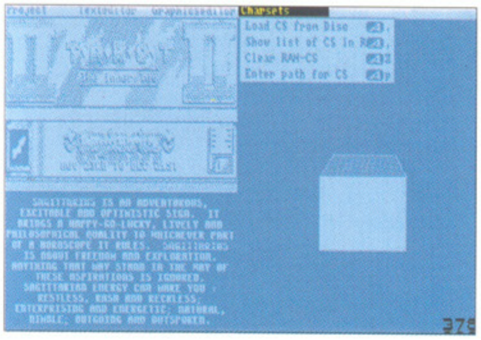


All right, so maybe it doesn't look like a million dollars. Math Drill is very easy to use and sharpens those important arithmetic skills.

programs are so popular. AmigaBASIC is pushed a little with this program, and it shows.

All right, so I didn't like it much. I can say that the program is simple enough to use for most people while being a fairly testing challenge. It will at least stretch the mental capacity, which is more than can be said of many other programs.

AMIGAFOX
NBS U616



Don't be fooled – AmigaFox does not allow you to mix text and graphics for layout. It is very useful for giving some control over printed output.

This is something of a first for Public Domain – a complete word publisher/DTP program! AmigaFOX was written by Michael Wust over a period of several months and tries to be powerful without being over complex.

Most fairly standard features are there: AmigaFOX will let you use different character sets on a page and include some IFF pictures. However, AmigaFOX is mono only – it prints out in black-and-white, and all pictures are converted into 16 grey scales.

There are four different program variants on the disk. Version 1.1 is in German only, and has a full German manual. V1.0 comes in German, English and American (NTSC sized screen) flavours, with a German and English manual. These manuals are very comprehensive (if a bit wordy) and are easily printed out for looking as you learn the program.

I can't pretend that AmigaFOX is an all singing and dancing DTP system, but for people who want to learn about the subject it's ideal. A good introductory program for simple layout work and at the price, you'd be silly not to try it.

AUDIO UTILITIES
STRICTLY PD U252

This is quite a good collection of music programs put together by Warriors UK for starting out in PD music. There are a total of seven rippers to extract samples from programs (saves buying a sampler if you're software collection is fairly big).

Rippers work by either running the ripper and then the program or by using the ripper after a program has finished, and seeing if any samples are still in the memory (they very often are). There are also lots of the usual sample sequencers.

Which ones? SoundTracker V2.3, V2.4 and V2.5, the Games Music Creator (GMC), MED, NoiseTracker V1.1+ and also an eight channel SoundTracker whose version number is somewhat obscure. Any one of these can be used to string together sound samples to create music. Perhaps the whole disk is a bit over the top but if you're looking for a starting point in music, this is fairly good.

SHYMER
DEJA VU LPD30



A typical scene from Shymer – well drawn graphics, shame about the game plot.

Another AMOS PD/Deja Vu release, Shymer is billed as "the case of the mixed up nursery rhymes". It's a text adventure game for children, and is designed to be simple without being dull. You have three tasks: find your cat Doc Wat Son, repair a boat in order to leave the island and untangle a few nursery rhymes.

Starting off in a small lane next to a gate, you soon encounter such characters as Jack and Jill. The playing area is a twee little island – sort of a modernised Enid Blytonland.

Playing it is a matter of typing one or two words – the parser (language interpreter) is fairly simple. Unfortunately this means that you can get stuck in the game, although I couldn't find anything too illogical.

In some ways I quite like Shymer – it's a brave attempt to give an educational program a professional game air. Amusing for a few hours, don't expect anything long term from it. A simple play, win and forget educational program.

TAROT II
17 BIT 1738 +1739



Well, would you know any of this zodiacal nonsense without the aid of Tarot II?

This offering is odd – it's a database of astrological signs. With each is a description of basic zodiac theory (Geminis are two-faced party monsters, Aries are brash, bold and lippy and so on). Each is a simple text description with some nice fancy Amiga graphics thrown in. A very different PD offering with not a lot to it, but very good presentation.

AMIGA CODERS CLUB 16
AMIGANUTS



If lots of really tedious assembly source listings are your thing (and why not) then get the complete ACC set.

The Amiga Coder's Club disks are extremely worthwhile if you are attempting to learn how to program your Amiga in assembly language (sometimes known as machine code, but I won't go into the differences here). Each month a new disk is released – here's a taste of just what you get.

For a start, the main menuing system is naturally all in machine code – the source code (program listing) is also on the disk, for coders to comment on and improve. Most of the disk contains source code for such mundane tasks as reading the mouse port, setting up pseudo graphic equalizer displays and NoiseTracker player modules. I can't pretend that it fascinates me immensely, but for people who have just got an assembler and want to see how to do some real machine code, the ACC disks really are invaluable. If you need some source code to scrutinise, look no further.

PD TOP TEN UTILITIES
17 BIT PD

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2) RSI Utilities
3) Art of Med
4) Converters
5) Vector Designer
6) RSI Demo Maker
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AD.40 **Luxor Teenager;** Variation on the classic with 2 anglepoise lamps!
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AD.47 **Walker Demo;** The incredible 2 Megabyte animation (2Mb - 2 disks)
AD.48 **Amy V Walker;** Amy the Squirrel chases AT-AT with Monkey Wrench! (Mb)
AD.49 **Budbrain Productions;** Quality animations including Movie! (2 disks)
AD.50 **Budbrain Demo 2;** Great sound, great graphics, another classic!
AD.51 **Fishtank demo;** Animation of sea creatures miming in time to music!
AD.52 **Popeye meets Beach Boys;** Very amusing singing combination...
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AD.54 **Simpsons;** Digitised: Do the Bartman plus great Bart slideshow!
AD.56 **Phenomena Megademo;** Trip to Mars; Fly around 3D landscape, Plus: Ray-Trace Fractal demo, Light Sourced World animation etc. GET THIS! (Mb)
AD.57 **Real Ghostbusters;** Space Ace style cartoon animation (Mb)
AD.58 **Applecus;** Ray Traced apples replace beads on animated abacus! (Mb)
AD.59 **Plasmutex 91 by TFA;** Super smooth animations! Truly amazing!
AD.60 **Magician;** variation of Juggler, excellent Ray-Traced animation! Plus: Jogger; Large ray-trace figure
AD.61 **Franklin the Fly;** Very amusing series of animations...(Mb)

To order any of the above disks simply quote the required disk numbers.
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PD Demo Zone



It's time to take a break from killing aliens, solving crimes and using that stuffy DTP package. Why not relax for a while with an entertaining PD Demo or two? **Maff Evans** sifts through the latest releases and brings you some nifty little numbers.

FENN-TASTIC VOLUME SIX

17 Bit, Disk 1250

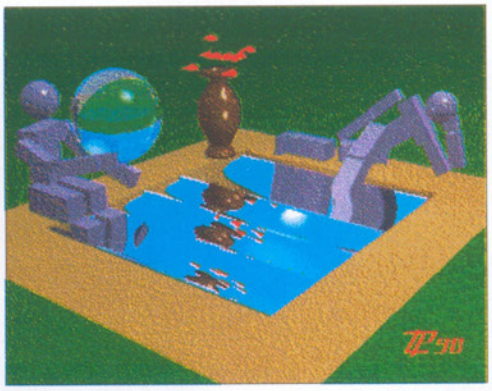


Well it's been a few months since the last Sherilyn Fenn disk appeared, so it's about time for a new one. Oh! What a stroke of luck! We have one right here! You know pretty much what to expect from the series by now and this latest update is pretty much more of the same, with scenes digitised from Desire and Hell at Sunset Motel and Twin Peaks, amongst others. Simple stuff, but there you go.



HOLIDAY ANIMATION

17 Bit, Disk 1256



All you Madonna fans just hold on a second! I'm sorry to disappoint you, but this isn't a clip featuring your heroine dancing about to her classic hit single! The animation is an illustration of an actual holiday – albeit a rather weird one! Picture the scene: the statues in the art galleries are tired and need a break, so they zoom off to the pool for a bit of a rest. The animation depicts two block-like figures relaxing by a rippling pool, just enjoying the sunshine and relaxing for a while.

SUPER WOMAN ANIMATION

17 Bit, Disk 1258



There are quite a few Sculpt-Animate demos to be found throughout the PD scene, but this one's a little longer than yer usual animation. The clip is a simple scene of a maniquin-like woman lifting a set of weights, er... and that's about it really. The rendering is pretty smooth though, and it's well worth any ray-tracing fans adding it to their collection.

AGATRON ANIMATION 31

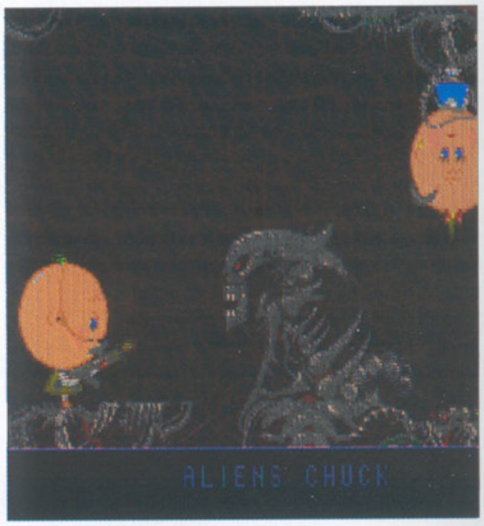
Strictly PD, Disk D404



Tobias Richter is back with his ground-breaking animation team to bring us yet another revolutionary clip. The animation utilises a new object rendering and ray-tracing system to produce a rather strange effect. Starting with a simple picture of a computer on a desk. The animation kicks into life with a lamp swinging around and a Porsche magically rising through the surface of the desk. Trust Agatron to do something surreal with a new effect!

YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS VOLUME 2

NBS, Disk H645



Everyone's favourite little PD demo star is back again! This time Chuck stars in some classic science fiction, from the Thirties feel of Flash Gordon to the cyberpunk approach of Aliens, Chuck is there in the action - Bod-like and bodacious! Other clips on the disk include a strange figure walking on water (could this be a comment on hero-worship for strange little grey figures?) and a neat little animation of Benny the Taxi from Who Framed Roger Rabbit? If you haven't seen any of the Chuck animations before, then this mini-collection is well worth investigating. On the other hand, if you're already a Chuck fan then get it immediately!

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V017 VC The calculator spreadsheet There is more that one program on this disk.
V020 RAYTRACER Excellent program to allow you to generate ray tracing images.
V023 APPOINTMENT CALENDAR : NAG is an electronic appointment calendar.
V024 BANKN Will allow you to keep your bank account in perfect balance with ease.
V027 QUICKBASE A Mailbase Management utility. Keep a rocord of all your friends
V028 SPELLCHECKER Current glossary contains 9,000 words. More can be added
V029 HOUSE HOLD INVENTORY Provides the means of maintaining HH possessions
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V213 (ST-21) **HOUSE MUSIC** INSTRUMENTS **Vol II** The Samples have Remixed back.
V214 STAR TREKKER VERSION V1.3 This is a sound tracker like program, much better.
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V216 SPECTRUM EMULATOR VERSION 1.0 Includes Games including some classics.
V218 VIRUS MURDERER & ZERO VIRUS Kills & Protects all of your disks. Virus killers.
V232 FRACTAL CREATOR VERSION V1.2 Another excellent Generating Program
V256 THE SILENTS Present: Some of the best Amiga music. Highley Recomened (st)
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V263 DRAWMAP3D V3.2b Generate flat Globes, Orbital & Mercator Pictures of the Earth. Reviewed in Amiga Format No 26.
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V328 ATCOPY-E Copies from one side of your bridge board to the other (Amiga-2-PC)
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1085 Swis Army on Manoeuvres (1Mb)
1582 Amy vs The Walker Animation (1Mb)
1609 Three more Stealthy Manoeuvres (*)
1700 Anti Lemmins Animation Requires 2Mb (2 Disks both unarced). Reviewed AF26
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1060 Star Trek The Next GenerationGame
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1107 Star Treking Song (2,2DD)
1254 Star Trek The Shoot m Up game
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1465 NCC Worker bee Star Trek Animation*
1696 The Star Trek trivia quiz game
1835 Star Trek:The whole game on 1 disk *
V367 STAR TREK WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN. All the series on disk listed in order.

Crusaders Eurocharts September
L1954 Find out what's best on the amiga This disk is updated Every month

DEMO DISKS

1441 THE PLASMUTEX 1991 by The flame Arrows. Madonna Music & some excellent graphical effects
1471 ACES OF THE SKY Agatron:35 The latest animation of two planes (*)
1532 ALIENATION AURAL ECTACY
1547 JETSET 'OVERLOAD' The MTV Braun European Music disk selection
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1625 INDIANA JONES & THE LAST CRUSADE The Hi-Res Slide show **(2)**
1629 THE SIMPSONS Animation: By Decay, Totaly excellent disk.* double anims here
1669 MADONNA (2) Shes back with more excellent pictures colour pictures.
1671 MAGICIAN ANIM VERSION * 2 Anothr Excellent ray traced Animtion. recommend
1698 REINCARNATION OF SGT (2) PEPPER Freaky colourful graphics. Reviewed in AF26
1713`PLAGUE OF DOOM The Ultimate Music selection collection disks (2)
1715 SINKING DEMAND/VECTOR is a cool looking mega demo with colourful effects
1720 MANIC RAVES BY EMDLESS PIRACY Excellent hard hitting tracks.(2 disks)
1727 THE ZEUS MEGA DEMO DISK
1728 MYSTICAL TUNES BY VERICAL Superb choice of music tracks for you to listern too.
1729 NO TECH BY BASS: Loud music and animating effects. very good disk indeed.
1736 MADONNA Slideshow III another Madonna slide show packed on 3 disks (3)
1740 DRUMS & PIPES Music collection high Quility sound not to be missed.
1741 KLF MUSIC DISK Sator presents this great music disk production disk.
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1748 SILENTS MEGA DEMO CALLED ICE This is there latest mega demos & is totaly stunning,Totaly Excellent Thanks Silents.
1762 TERMINATOR II SLIDE SHOW There's some excellent pictures from the film **(2)**
1764 PURE METAL CODERS Another mega demo with more excellent effects & music.
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1768 DARKNESS MEGA DEMO II Another well done mega demo disk. Excellent disk.
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1934 OPERATION METALSTORM MUSIC
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1940 THE SLIDESHOW BY SPIDER
1941 LOTUS ESPRIT II PLAYABLE PREVIEW
1947 THE NEW SILENTS PRESENT THE FRANCE DEMO This is our demo of the month AND IS TOTALY EXCELLENT
1950 R-TYPE II PLAYABLE PREVIEW
1951 CRYSTAL SYMPHONIES BY PHENOMENA
1952 THE VOYAGE BY TFF

REVIEWED LAST MONTH

1955 THE BOINGS ANIMATION *
1956 THE CONGAMAN & THE WINDMILL
1957 THE ALPHA OMEGA MEGA DEMO
1958 THE VISTA FRACTAL DEMO DISK
1959 REAL PINBALL ANIMATION *
1960 REAL 3D SLIDESHOW
1961 THE INSIDERS CLUB

GAMES

0982 MONOPOLY & CLUEDO GAMES
1328 WHEEL OF FORTUNE One of the best Quiz game's, As the series on Television.
1367 BLACKJACK The Casino Simulator.
420 DTRIS Played Tetris Well, This is the best version to Date (With 2 Player option)
1454 MEGA BALL (THE BEST ARKANOID GAME,Better that any Full Price Games).
1534 THE HOLY GRAIL Text adventure simular in styleto the inforgam games.
1561 TRITWIS This is the best version of Tetris on the amiga with a 3 play option.
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L8 - LIZZYS FUNTIME: SHAPE, CLOCK PICTURE & KEYS, MONEY, SEASONS & MOUSE (2 DISKS) Both reviewed in Amiga Format (June 1991). Educational
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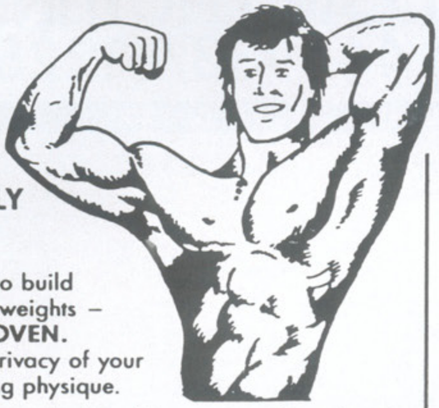
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D113) Silents Scroller
D115) Utopia Cartoon Slides
D117) Bunsen Burner
D119) The Link Megademo
D122) Ghost Pool
D124) Scoopex Seven Sins
D126) Disney Slideshow
D128) Sleeping Bag Demo
D130) System 5 Demo
D132) Alpha Flight Megademo 2
D134) Share And Enjoy 46
D136) Thames TV Demo
D138) Vision Megademo
D140) Fast Cars Slideshow
D142) Mobed
D145) Kefrens Wall Demo
D147) Beast 2 Preview
D149) Treacl
D151) Share and Enjoy 47
D153) Simpsons Mini Mega (XXX)
D155) Glass World Animation
D157) Congaman Animation
D160) Anarchy Scratch Pack 39
D162) Bugs Bunny Anim*
D164) Smurf +Cokeman Anims*
D166) Juggette Animation

UTILITIES

P02) A68K Assembler
P04) North C
U001) Jazzbench
U004) Visicalc Spreadsheet
U006) Intro Maker
U008) Sidney And Friends
U011) XLS Disk 1
U013) Clip Art
U015) The Magicians Utilities
U017) Steel Moon Utilities
U019) CADV
U021) Super C Disk
U024) Red Devil Utils 4
U026) Amibase V3.76
U031) Bootbench
U033) C-Light 1+2
U035) System Checker
U037) Tetra Copier
U053) Text Plus Wordprocessor
U056) Wordwright Wordprocessor
U058) Running Man Update
U060) Mag Media Disk Utilities
U062) New Age Utilities
U063) Pendle Europa Utils
U065) Fonts
U067) ICPUG Printer Utilities
U069) XLS Best Of PD 3

GAMES

G004) Breakout Construction Set
G006) Star Trek (2)
G008) Drip *
G010) Quiz Master 2
G012) Popeye
G014) Tennis *
G016) Flaschbier
G018) Treasure Hunt
G020) Wet Beaver Games
G022) Workbench Games And Hacks
G024) PD Games Compilation
G026) Movie Games
G028) Eatmine
G030) Return To Earth
G032) Klondike
G034) Trek Trivia
G036) Pipeline
G019) Battleforce
G021) Arcade Games
G023) Star Trek The Next Gen.
G025) UGA Games
G027) Hack
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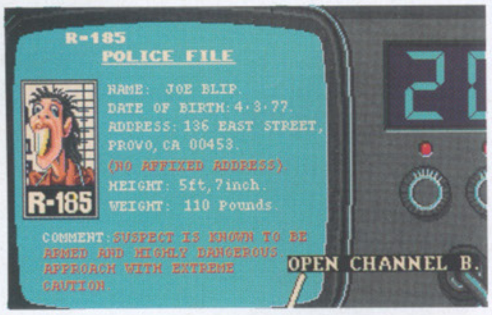
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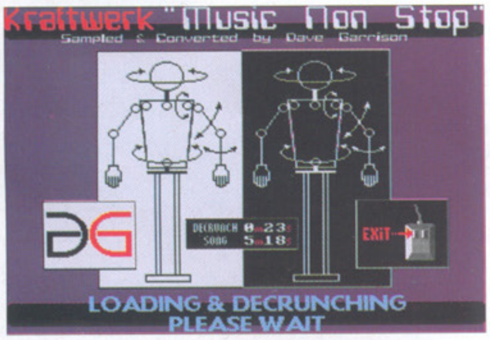
RODENT ROUND-UP
NBS, Disks H648 and H649



This is a rather odd cartoon which sets the tone for a whole new story. The scene is a crowded US city in the future. Strange humanoid, rodent-like mutants have begun to appear on the streets terrorising the city's inhabitants and wreaking havoc wherever they go. A new police force has been set up to deal with this new breed of criminals – The Rodent Patrol. The first disk sees the Patrol being contacted to locate a particularly vicious mutant and the story of the chase continues on the second disk. Hopefully this 'pilot' animation will soon be followed up by a whole series of Rodent Patrol cartoons, since this is just the kind of thing that Saturday Morning TV cartoons are made of!



URANUS MUSIC
17 Bit, Disk



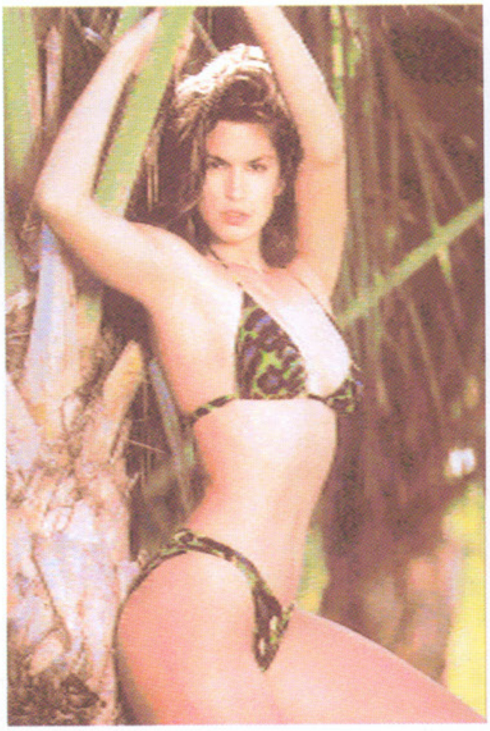
As far as PD music debuts go, this is most definitely one of the most impressive. The disk contains a variety of different musical styles, ranging from jangly soundtrack music to heavy 808 State style dance, with each of the tunes being backed by some pretty pictures and simple, scrolly animations.

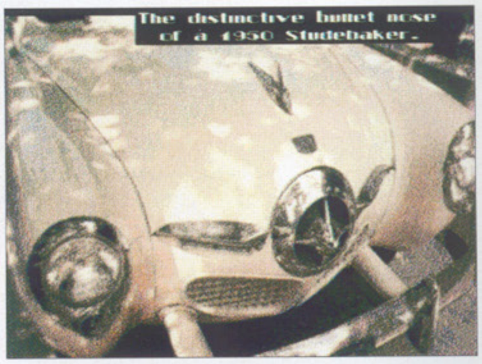
The piece de resistance has to be the second tune on the disk, which is an absolutely superb version of Kraftwerk's *Music Non-Stop*, it even includes the *Boing Boom Tschak* intro. Id even go as far as to say that its the best Kraftwerk remix I've ever heard!

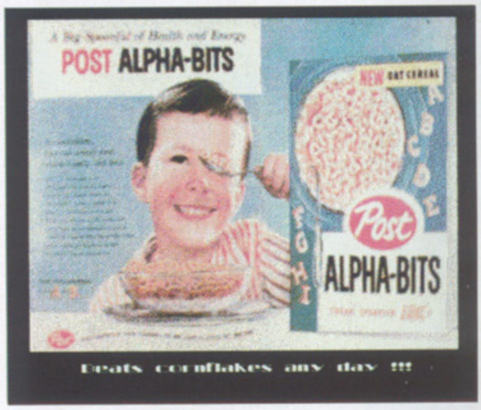


THE FOX SLIDESHOW
17 Bit, Disk 1283

Another slideshow containing digitised girlie images, but this one is a much more tasteful selection than some I could mention! The disk comprises of various pictures digitised from various fashion and glamour scenes. Surprise, surprise, there's even a Sherilyn Fenn picture in there. All the piccies have been grabbed extremely well, with pin-sharp clarity and some wonderful colours. This is just the disk to show off the photographic capabilities of your Amiga – excellent for bragging to your mates, unless they've got a Macintosh or something!







FIFTIES SLIDESHOW
17 Bit, Disks 1262 and 1263

Most PD slideshows tend to be either of current pop stars or hit films, but these two disks are quite different. Instead of going for a more obvious subject, the demo is made up of various pictures from Fifties life, from furniture and ornaments through breakfast cereal commercials to cars and space exploration. The pictures are all pretty well digitised and cover a wide enough range of subjects to capture the idea of the Fifties lifestyle – not that I remember it. I'm not that old, you know!

PD TOP TEN DEMOS
17 BIT PD

1) Madonna Nude
2) Intro's Disk 60
3) Janet Jackson Demo
4) Harlequin
5) The Boings
6) Virtual Worlds
7) PMC Alpha Omega
8) Drums and Pipes
9) Graphics Comp
10) Amegoids

CONTACT:

**Strictly PD: 11 York Place
Brandon Hill, Bristol
BS1 5UT**

**NBS: 132 Gunville Road, Isle of
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Telephone 0983 529594**

**17 Bit Software: PO Box 97,
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AMIGA DEMOS

Some people love them, some people cannot see the point of them, but they are here to stay! There is no better way to show off your Amiga!

D 001 ALCATRAZ MEGADEMO 4 (3 DISKS) Brilliant! One of the biggest.
D 008 STATIC BYTES MEGADEMO Six parts, clever stuff.
D 014 CRYPTOBURNERS MEGADEMO 2 Contains some good demos. worth a look.
D 033 TOMSOFT TRIP TO MARS. Vector graphics with a theme *
D 034 BUDBRAIN MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) A classic! Not to be missed but beware of the very risque cartoons.
D 035 CRIONICS MEGADEMO Another great! Famous for the Madonna part.
D 061 POSSESSED MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Good animated space intro
D 067 MIRAGE MEGADEMO (1 MEG) Yet another good one. Some good FX.
D 078 CRIONICS NEVERWARE (1 MEG) Famed for the brill Madonna graphic.
D 080 KATHARIS MEGADEMO From Poland! Famous X-Copy demo, plus.
D 081 INTUITION MEGADEMO Includes the flashiest ever aciid demo.
D 091 FILLET THE FISH Similar to PUGGS, but not as good, still brill.
D 125 DEXION MEGADEMO Underrated at the time. Old but good
D 135 REBELS MEGADEMO Excellent for its time. Good demos.
D 136 ALCATRAZ MEGADEMO Again underrated at the time but very good.
D 138 RAF MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Still fresh after all this time!
D 141 PHENOMENA MEGADEMO Brilliant group today, always been good.
D 146 RSI MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) An all time great! Still good today! Great music and graphics. A must!!
D 150 IAN & MICK MEGADEMO Inc. classic toilet door demo.
D 153 PUGGS IN SPACE Not generally classed as a megademo, but not to be missed. Great for the kids.
D 160 TRILOGY MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Includes game, a classic, contains a joke, or is it a bug? You decide.
D 161 PREDATORS MEGADEMO (2 DISKS) Don't miss this one, great sound, graphics and game. Another classic.
D 166 SILENTS MEGADEMO Early Silents, the brilliance is born!
D 180 SCOOPEX MENTAL HANGOVER Another classic which pushed the boundaries of the Amiga light years on.
D 190 RSI CEBIT DEMO. Terrific demo, with the best ever music *
D 223 BUDBRAIN MEGADEMO 2 Not quite as good as the first, stillgood!
D 225 HORIZON MEGADEMO (Sleeping Bag) Superb ray traced anim. Great
D 236 GOLDFIRE ULTIMATE FX....This group continues to improve!!
D 242 3-D DEMOS....Get out your 3-D glasses and CHECK THESE OUT!

AMIGA DEMOS

D 243 KEFRENS - THE WALL.....Great intro! Good graffix, then so so
D 259 PHENOMENA ENIGMA Absolutely Awesome!!! Fantastic, Get it
D 261 SIMPSONS DEMO BY DECAY: Probably the best so far. (1 MEG)
D 264 ANALOGUE MEGA DEMO. Great intro and novel demo selection.
D 265 GALLOW MEGADEMO Purple Haze! Great colours, fair demos.
D 267 BASS MEGA DEMO. Great housey music throughout.
D 269 PULLING THE TRIGGER. Loved the music! Well presented demos (1 meg)
D 294 SILENTS: ICE MEGADEMO (1 MEG) Brill demo, More interesting for coders.
D 295 TOMSOFT: VIRTUAL WORLD (1 MEG) Its a classic. Best this year.
D 296 MAGNETIC FIELDS: HYSTERISIS. Good demo, now loader friendly.
D 299 TAS EGO TRIP (1 MEG) Huge demo, great music and value.
D 700 PMC ALPHA OMEGA Ray-tracing, vectors, excellent.
D 704 ITS MENTAL 3 Sick jokes, cartoons etc. Not for the nervous.
D 705 VOYAGE Cleverly linked demos. Good vectors.
D 706 THE CULT: VECTOR DANCE 2 Good GFX and original vector FX.
D 708 ANARCHY DEMO So new I can't remember what it was called!!
S 393/4/5 DEFINATIVE MADONNA SLIDESHOW...(3 disks) 1 meg & 2 drives
S 441 INVISIBLE WORLD SLIDESHOW. See it and itch. Micro bugs
S 486/7 WWF ANIM AND SLIDES (1 MEG) (2 DISK SET) US wrestling
H 545 JET FIGHTER ANIM...Similar to The Run, but far far better (1 MEG)
H 555 BATMAN THE MOVIE ANIMATION (1 MEG)....Good funny cartoon
H 559 MAGICIAN AND JOGGER ANIMATIONS (1 MEG). .Ray traced anims.
H 560 CAR & UNICYCLE ANIMATION (1 MEG)....Brill anim, a must for fans!
H 564 EVIL DEAD DEMO (1 MEG).. Get the goulies, before they get yours
H 565 RGB & FOCUS (1 MEG)....The famous 'stretching nose' animation!
H 573 TOO MUCH 3D (1 MEG)....The spaceship flies out of the screen!
H 576 IRAQ DEMO Amusing animation of what might have been
H 577 MORE AEROTOONS More in the series of Stealthy cartoons
H 579 MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS More cute anims from Steve Packer
H 607 WINGS ANIMATION. Brilliant stuff and long too! (1 MEG)Good
H 636/7 STAR TREK MEGADEMO (1 MEG, 2 DISKS) Best of Ritcher!
H 645 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 2 Super-Star chuck anims
H 647 VIETNAM ANIM (1 MEG) Another Stealthey-type animation
H 650 OPTIMUM PRESSURE CRISIS (1 MB) Great series of animated slides
H 652 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 3 Latest works from Steve.
H 653 YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 4 ......and more. YET MORE CLASSY ANIMATIONS 5 Final in the series
X110 FRAXION HORROR Great cartoon graphic demo of nasty stuff.

POWER DEMOS

(All demos in this section require loads of memory)

P 001/2 WALKER DEMO 1 (2 MEG 2 DISKS)
P 003/4 WALKER DEMO 2 (2 MEG 2 DISKS)
P 021-026 UPGRADE(1.5 MEG 2 DRIVES 6 yes 6 disks!!!) multi part anim
P 010/11 HEADKICK ANIM (2 MEG 2 DISKS plus HARD-DRIVE)
P 012/3/4 STATION AT KHERN (2 MEG 3 DISKS)
P 030/1 DRAGONS LAIR 2 GAME DEMO Superb (3 MEG, 2 DISKS)
P 032/3/4 BUZZED Great Ray traced anim (2 MEG, 3 DISKS)
P 035/6/7/8 AUTOMATED LIGHT (BATTLESTAR GALACTICA) (3 MEG, 4 DISKS)
P 044/5 ANTI LEMMING DEMO (2 MEG)Excellent Eric Shwartz animation.
P 046/7 THE DATING GAME (3 MEG 2 DISK SET) 4 mins long anim!! Truly impressive Eric Schwartz demo
P 050-3 TOBIAS RITCHER: LANDING (4 MEG) (4 DISKS) Brilliant!

MUSIC

M 005 MAHONEY & KAKTUS Brilliant music disk
M 030 DIGITAL CONCERT 2: Over 12 mins of mixed house music.
M 200/1/2 SAE AMAZING TUNES 2 (3 DISKS 1 MEG)....Superb!
M 212 MAG FIELDS CHIP FESTIVAL....Another huge collection.
M 216/7 RAF MEGA MIX 2 (2 DISK SET)....Good quality music mix.
M 226 DYNAMITE BEATS 4...Another very classy music disk from Max
M 230 DEXION PARTY MUSIC AND PICCYS....A good disk as always
M 232 ALCATRAZ MUZIC......Classy presentation, 3 good tracks!!!
M 269 ALCATRAZ MORE THAN MUSIC. Superb.
M 311 LIONS: INXS (1 MEG) 2 tracks of remixed INXS.
M 314 MAG FIELDS: SPACED OUT 1 (1 MB) Beaty, housey music.
M 315 MAG FIELDS: SPACED OUT 2 (1 MB) More of the same. Good.
M 316 LSD: DON'T PANIC (1 MB) Well presented good sounds

ANIMATION SPECIAL!

The works of Tobias Richter. All require 1Mb.

H 002 Agatron Anim. 2 Misc - Jet fighter landing. Basic.
H 003 Agatron Anim. 3 Star Trek - Shuttle fly past.
H 005 Agatron Anim. 5 Star Trek - Klingon fires Torpedoes
H 007 Agatron Anim. 7 Star Wars - Fighter doing loops etc
H 009 Agatron Anim. 9 Star Wars - Fighter flyby. Impressive
H 010 Agatron Anim. 10 Star Trek - Enterprise in dry dock
H 011 Agatron Anim. 11 Tron - Tank vs Deaktivator. Good vectors
H 012 Agatron Anim. 12 Tron Animation. Not one of the best
H 013 Agatron Anim. 13 Misc - Robo 1. A robot waving.
H 014 Agatron Anim. 14 Star Trek - Workbee and Reliant. 3 Shots.
H 017 Agatron Anim. 17 Star Trek - TWOK Animation. Short but OK.
H 018 Agatron Anim. 18 Star Trek - Enterprise fly by. Short
H 020 Agatron Anim. 20 Misc - Huey the helicopter taking off
H 023 Agatron Anim. 23 Star Trek - Fleet Manoevre. Brilliant
H 024 Agatron Anim. 24 Misc - A pen signing 'Tevox'
H 025 Agatron Anim. 25 The Run. Superb car chase. A classic
H 026 Agatron Anim. 26 Misc - A ship rocking at sea. Poss Bug.
H 027 Agatron Anim. 27 Misc - A book opening!
H 028 Agatron Anim. 28 Star Trek - Shuttle and Enterprise
H 029 Agatron Anim. 29 Star Wars - Millenium Falcon in chase
H 030 Agatron Anim. 30 Star Wars - Millenium Falcon goes hyper
H 031 Agatron Anim. 31 Misc - Porsch rising out of a table
H 032 Agatorn Anim. 32 Space - Space probe flying away.
H 033 Agatron Anim. 33 Space - Space probe passing. Short.
H 034 Agatron Anim. 34 Star Trek - The Space Office. A bit short
H 035 Agatron Anim. 35 Space - Space probe flying away.
H 036 Agatron Anim. 36 Star Trek - Bird of pray loop de loop!
H 037 Agatron Anim. 37 Misc - Tobias goes knackers!

FISH, T-BAG, AND GLAMOUR DISKS

We now have all the FISH disks up to 520. The FISH AQUARIUM holds up to FF470, Beyond that is a Fish index disk. We currently have TBag disks up to 54. For contents of Fish, TBag, and all the other disks check out our latest catalogue disk. IT'S AMAZING11 (1MB only)

We also have a collection of over 50 glamour disks. 5 or 10 disk 'best selection' packs available on request.

GAMES

G 107 STAR TREK GAME Good graphic adventure, Best with 1 meg (2 disks)
G 117 EATMINE Addictive Boulderdash clone. (not A1500 etc)
G 133 PD GAMES COMPO Good selection inc Welltrix and Breakout.
G 136 DRIP Very tricky painter type game. Almost commercial quality!
G 142 PD GAMES COMPO 3....Great Pacman plus 2 others.
G 143 JEOPARDY (1 MEG)....Version of the board game Risk!
G 152 PD GAMES COMPO 9....Battlemech, Bullrun (Battle Sim) and more
G 154 BATTLEFORCE (1 MEG)....Strategy battle game.
G 159 ANTEP (1 MEG)....RPG also SLOTS, a good car chase game.
G 170 MEGABALL. The ultimate PD Breakout game?
G 171 ZEUS Simple but addictive puzzle game. Great.
G 175 CUBULUS. Great 'Rubics Cube' type puzzle. Excellent.
G 178 WIZZYS QUEST (1 MEG) Super game for PD. (Shareware).
G 179 LLAMATRON By Jeff Minter, blast the beasties (Shareware).
G 180 BLOCK IT 1.2 A tough but addictive puzzle game.
G 181 JT's GAME COMPENDIUM Some old, but most are new.
G 182 MENTAL IMAGE GAMEDISK 1 A superb compilation of new games
G 185 BLACKJACK LAB More serious than a game, inc tutor!
G 187 SUPER SKODA CHALLENGE (1MB) A Lada fun for 4 players.
G 189 NO MANS LAND (1MB) A good 2 player shoot each other game.
G 197 NBS GREAT GAMES VOL 3... Super new games
G 198 PATIENCE CARD GAMES..Superb games and graphics

EDUCATION

E 006/7 LEARN AND PLAY....Games plus maths and words (kids aged 5+)
E 008 TALKING COLOURING BOOK.....Draw the pictures then colour them

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U 107 VIRUS CATALOGUE. What it does, how, and where from.
U 225 AMIBASE A good database. Start a disk catalogue now.
U 233 UEDIT Good Public Domain Wordprocessor.
U 267 ELECTROCAD DEMO (1 MEG) Circuit diagram design tool. No save in demo.
U 611 MED 3.11B. Latest version of this great music utility.
U 616 AMIGA FOX Public Domain basic DTP
U 619 MESSYSID. Dreams answered. Working Messydos plus SID.
U 621/4 C-MANUAL. Latest 4 disk C Manual by Anders Bjerin.
U 629/30 COMMSPILATION. 2 Disks packed with modem utilities.
U 631 SONIC DEVELOPMENTS MUSIC PACK 3 Latest Trackers inc source
U 633 PRINTER DRIVER GENERATOR KIT plus over 50 drivers
U 638/9 WINDOWSBENCH V1.0 Nice workbench alternative
U 640 IMPLODER V.4 A brand new cruncher/archiving utility
U 644 PCQ PASCAL SHELL Easily used. Edit, assemble etc. Docs

CLIP ART

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U 341 CLIP ART 1 Animals plus collection information
U 342 CLIP ART 2 Animals, Architecture, People, Art 1
U 343 CLIP ART 3 Art 2 (fonts)
U 344 CLIP ART 4 Arrows, Art Deco, Logos, Stars, Explosions
U 345 CLIP ART 5 Education, Financial, Art misc, Symbols
U 346 CLIP ART 6 Food and Drink
U 347 CLIP ART 7 Environment, Food and Drink, Health and Home
U 348 CLIP ART 8 Valentines, Weddings, Leisure
U 349 CLIP ART 9 Birthdays, Xmas, Easter, New Year etc
U 350 CLIP ART 10 People (Children, Family, Fashion, Romance)
U 351 CLIP ART 11 People (Men Woman)
U 352 CLIP ART 12 Signs (Bears, Christmas, Misc)
U 353 CLIP ART 13 Sports (American Football to Warter Polo)
U 354 CLIP ART 14 Work and Trades 1, Transport
U 355 CLIP ART 15 Work and Trades 2

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- Arnhem £14.99
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Show overview

The World of Commodore Show has developed out of the original Commodore show, with some influence from the Ami-Expo events in the USA. Future Publishing, the publishers of *Amiga Format*, have taken on the organisation of the show and are expecting to put the event on for the next three years.

World of Commodore has many different aspects. Inevitably it's a showcase for Commodore, a chance for them to show off all their new products, but the success of the Amiga as the dominant format for games has also made it a big showcase for the games software houses, so it's taken over much of the glitz and glamour normally associated with the recently-defunct September CES show.

It also draws heavily on the more serious side of the Amiga, with the presence of most of the UK's top names in Amiga hardware and software along with a substantial presence of big names from the US. And it retains, unlike many consumer shows, a strong marketplace element in the form of the Christmas Shopping Mall.

On top of all this there's a number of special events influenced by *Amiga Format*, including sessions where you can meet the editors of the Amiga magazines (*Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, Amiga Power*) and the top names in games programming (Bitmaps, Bullfrog, Graftgold and DMA Design).

Special Events

Multimedia Theatre: daily

Product presentations from Ocean, Electronic Arts, Mindscape, MicroProse and Checkmate Digital.

Technical forum with Commodore Technical support department

'Meet the editors' question-and-answer sessions with the editors of Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, Amiga Power, PC Format, Commodore Format

Amiga Format stand: daily

Meet the programmers question-and-answer sessions with Bullfrog, Graftgold, the Bitmap Brothers and DMA Design

Problem-solving sessions: specialists from the magazines will be on hand to answer your questions

CDTV City

CDTVs will be up and running at the CDTV City, where you will be able to go along and use the latest CD titles. Get a real hands-on look at CDTV.

Games Arcade

All the big new games will be available for you to play in the Commodore games arcade. A charge of 50p for 15 minutes will go to charity.

Super-X simulator

Lurking at the back of the show will be the large and very impressive Super-X simulator for stunning rides into a virtual reality.

BIG ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM COMMODORE



Commodore were certainly expected to make a big splash at their own show, and it seems that they certainly will. We have just spoken to Commodore UK's marketing main man Jonathon Anderson, who has clued us in on some major news affecting the Amiga which will break at the Show. Unfortunately, we're not allowed to say any more just yet: you're going to have to be at the show to get the news early…

Meanwhile, there is definite confirmation that the two big steps forward for the Amiga 500 will take place at the Show. You'll be able to see the CD-ROM drive for the Amiga actually running, and you'll also be able to witness the arrival of Workbench 2.

The A690 CD-ROM drive will enable Amiga owners to run CDTV titles, giving them a look in on the huge new world that CD is opening up. While CD has been around as a storage medium for some time, this is the first time that a genuine mass-market CD storage device has been available for any home computer in the UK, giving Commodore a real advantage as computing finally moves into the 90s.

Although the CDs can only be read by the Amiga, not written to, the software manufacturers can store up to 650 Mb on each disc so the potential for extremely ambitious titles is vast. So far, the most exciting developments have been along the lines of encyclopaedias and atlases, interactive books with masses of pictures and sound stored to back up the words.

Games to date have mainly been limited to Amiga conversions, so there's no thrills for the Amiga owner there: but the next generation of CDTV games will start to arrive very soon, bringing an astonishing leap forward. Commodore experts are currently testing the A690 to ensure that it is compatible with the CDTV titles that are available at the moment (there's an operating system patch on the CDTV which makes it slightly different from the Amiga) but most of the CDTV titles should be actually there and in action on the A500 at the Show…

Workbench 2 is the latest version of the Amiga's operating system, coming with a new Denise and Agnus chip design as well as a new Kickstart chip. Ever since it appeared on the Amiga 3000 about a year or so ago, we have been expecting it to appear for the A500 and A2000: now it finally has, and it should be on sale some time before Christmas. Besides being generally slicker and far more useable, it also has two new graphics modes for high-resolution displays. You'll be able to see it in its full working glory at the Show, and it's the very latest update, too.

Amiga Format is official sponsor of this year's Commodore show, the World of Commodore at **Earls Court 2** in London on November 15-17. Of course we'd like to see you there, but we don't want you to go just because we say you should. Take a look at this preview of some of the events, announcements and new products that will be at the Show, and then decide for yourself…

What's going on at this show, then?



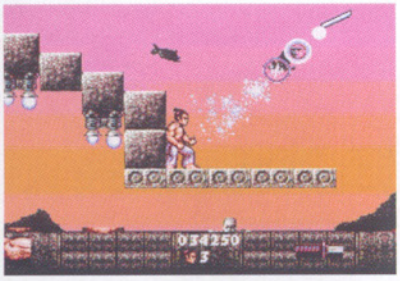
Games at the Show

DOMARK



Look out for arcade beat-em-up *Pitfighter* ("just released"), *Race Driving* (the Atari coin-op "along the lines of *Hard Drivin'* but much better"), *Super Space Invaders* ("17 years on and still a classic - the cow mutilation section is amazing") new flight simulator *MiG-29M SuperFulcrum*, and World Cup Rugby ("the *Kick Off* of rugby games", with Rugby World Cup fever still on the go). On CDTV you can play Trivial Pursuit (lots of animation and all the voices by the Spitting Image peeps). As well as this mega bundle there will be free plays on the Atari arcade machines plus the fact that you'll get your chance to have a go at all the new games.

MIRRORSOFT



Launched at the Show will be *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2* (the one actually based on the immensely popular coin-op: should be a blast!) and *First Samurai* (a classic even before it's released: the graphics and sound you just have to experience!). Get one of the first looks at *Cisco Heat, Reach for the Skies,* the new Cinemaware titles, *Rollerbabes, TV Sports Boxing* and *TV Sports Baseball.* All of the games will be available for you to play, with a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* coin-op machine which will be on permanent free play, free draws for T-shirts and books, hi-score contests, loads of free demos of Mindscape games on disk for you to take home with you (of *Devious, Robozone, Mega-lo-Mania* and more).

MINDSCAPE



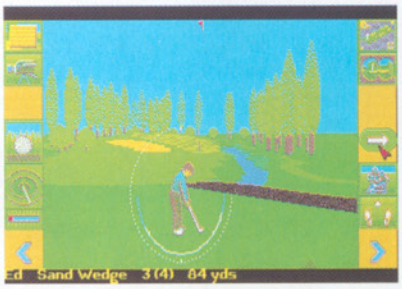
Adventure fans should watch out for *Ultima 7* (already available on the PC) while *Ultima 6* reaches the Amiga. More role-playing action follows in *Knightmare* (TV show licence with Tony Crowther and his *Captive* game system promises great things) and *Moonstone* (a knights of old adventure). Get down with long-awaited fun sequel *Paperboy 2, Captain Planet and the Planeteers* finally hits the screen and *4D Sports Boxing* exercises its muscles. There's also a lot of new stuff from the US, mainly on PC, including *Wing Commander 2*, the follow-up *Strike Commander, Chessmaster 3000* and *D Generation.*

ELECTRONIC ARTS



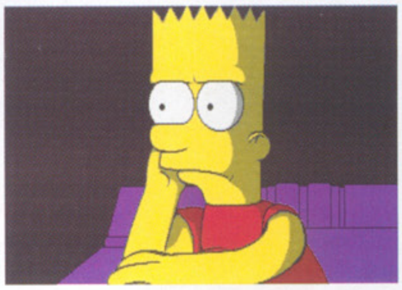
Populous 2 very much sets the theme for Electronic Arts this year: Bullfrog will also be proudly presenting the *World War One* edition of *Powermonger* while *Castles* from Interplay (another "you take control of your people" game, this time with you as lord of a castle building up your defences) will be winging its way from the States. For the flight sim fans, *Birds of Prey* will be flying in (a huge multi-scenario sim from the Argonaut team with many different types of aircraft).

MICROPROSE



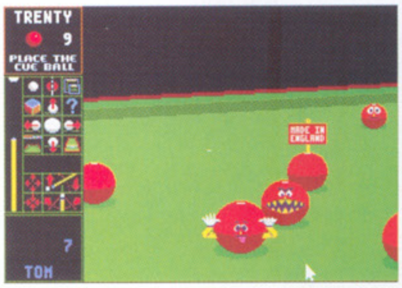
Big new releases for the simulator whizzes are *Formula 1 Grand Prix* (the new race-driving game programmed by Geoff Crammond, famed for his *Stunt Car Racer* and the classic *Revs* on the BBC) and *MicroProse Golf* (excellent 3D landscapes are rumoured to make the most of this sport sim). Also featuring will be *Knights of the Sky* (air-to-air combat in a sim stylee but with a bit more fun) and *Covert Action* (poking around for trouble in a Max Remington spy thriller), while first impressions can be gleaned of the forthcoming sim stunners *Gunship 2000* and *F-117A Stealth Fighter.*

OCEAN



Don't be at all surprised to see Bart Simpson sneaking up behind you, because he's still a big favourite for Christmas. Meanwhile, the hot arcade title *Smash TV* remains top of the "I gotta see it" list for games fans: the ZZKJ conversion should be spot on. Film fans will be watching out for *Robocop 3*, possibly the first major film licence to be done in 3D since *Star Wars*. But Christmas Number One hope for many an optimistic game reviewer is *Wizzkid,* follow-up to the huge *Wizzball* and a very weird, very original and quite possibly monumentally good effort from Sensible Software.

VIRGIN



Jimmy White will be wandering the aisles of the show, cue in hand. He'll be promoting Virgin's Format Gold snooker sim. New titles that will be getting their first public outing are: *Realms* from Graftgold:an icon-controlled god game with a wild strategic bite. Vektor Graphics will be showing off their NASA busting *Space Shuttle Simulator.* Look out too for *Floor 13, Rolling Ronny* and the *Mag scrolls collection*, with *Vengeance of Excalibur* and *Conan* previewed on PC. CDTV titles North Polar Expedition and Spirit of Excalibur will be demoed.

PSYGNOSIS

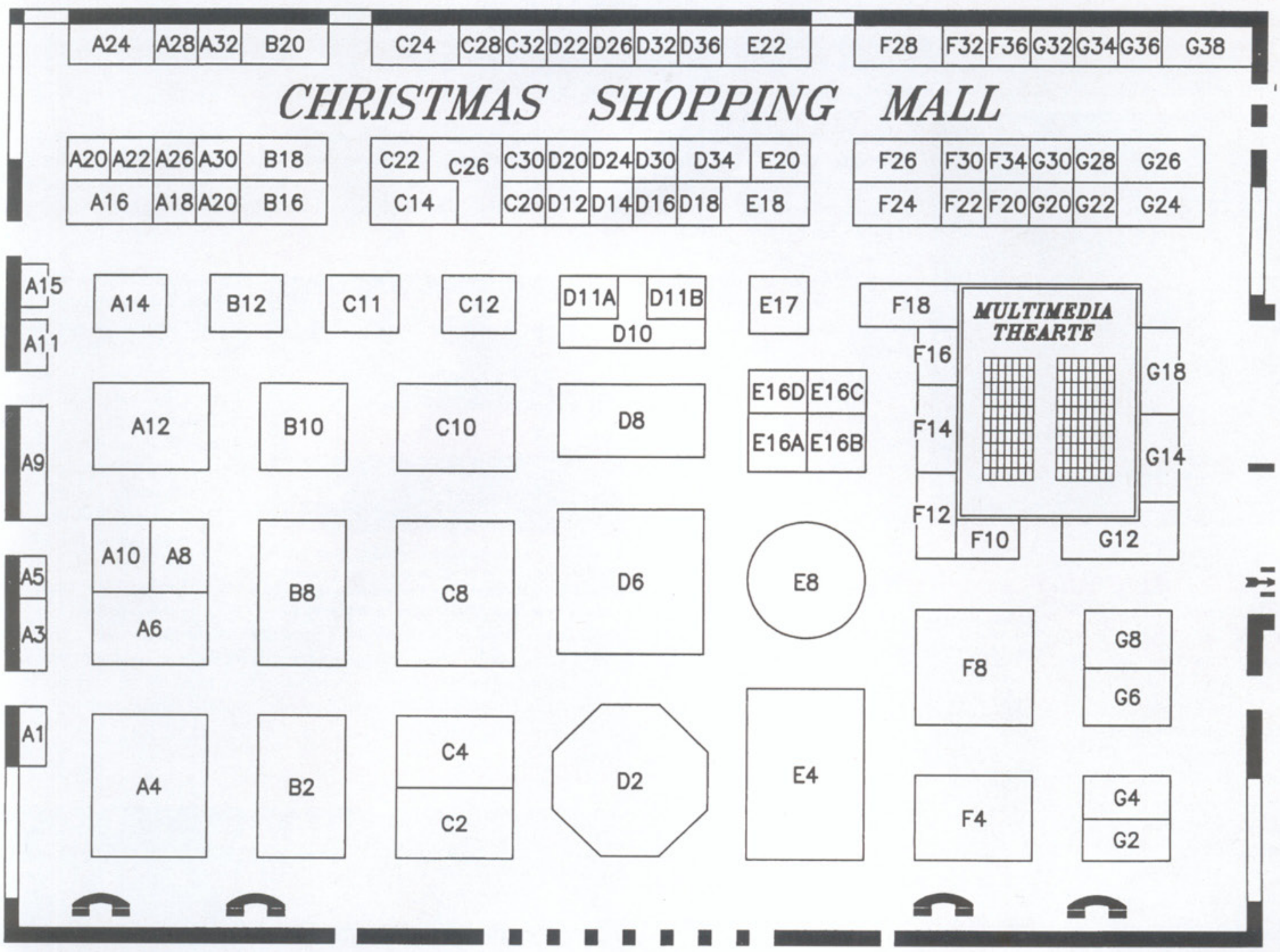


The eagerly awaited *Lemmings* Data disk may well dig its way through, although the title isn't due for release until 1992. The definite stars will be *Barbarian 2, Mage, Leander* and *Ork. Barbie 2* takes the sword wielding wonder on further adventures through forests and castles. *Mage* is a shoot-out with a difference: you play a wizard who's kicking butt with spell power in a horizontal shoot out. *Leander* is a classic platform epic while Ork is an action puzzler. All exhibit the outrageous Psygnosis graphics and evil tough gameplay.

GREMLIN



All-out excitement is the name of the game at the Gremlin stand. Rather than flashing loads of new games around, they've decided that they "just want to give the people a good time". So they're making the most of the launch of *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2* to arrange an enormous four-player console, kitted out with Lotus seats, pedals and a steering wheel. The action will be shown on a huge video screen as players compete for a big prize is promised for the winner: something like a CDTV.



Who's there and where you'll find them

NAME	STAND NO
Microdeal	A1
New Dimensions	A5
Bitcon Devices	A5
Domark	A8a
Emap Images	A8b
HB Marketing	A9
Manor Court Sup	A11
Turbo S/W	A14
DTBS	A15
TIB	A16
Harpers Comp	A18
Manderin	A20
Dial a Quiz	A22a
Classic Computers	A22b
Serve U Computers	A24 A28 A32 B20
Ruby Soft	A26
IC PUG	A30
Virgin	B2 B4
Mirrorsoft	B10
Precision	B12
Rombo	B16
E Arts	C2
Psygnosis	C4
Ocean	C8
Microprose	C10
MC Distribution	C11
Proton	C12
Computer mates	C14
17 Bit Centre	C26
Cortex	C20
Computers Manual	C22
MD Office	C24
Siren	C28
Brighton Comp Sup	C30
Adventure Soft	C32
Gremlin	D8
Silica Shop / SDL	D10
RGB	D12
Chandler Enterprises	D14
We Serve	D16
Care Electronics	D18
Stratford Tools Ltd	D20
USF Ltd	D22
Micromail	D24
Amiga Direct	D30 D34
SNAP	D32
Database Direct	D36
Mindscape	E4
Hi Soft	E16a
Amiga World Mag	E16b
Digita	E16c
Pandaal	E16d
Media Direct	E17
Videk	E18
Connect Inter	E22
Dowling	E20
Supra Corporation	F4
Great Valley Products	F8
Dial a Disk	F10
WTS	F14
Sunrize Industries	F16
CTW	F18
Gasteiner	F22
Trojan	F24
Checkmate	G2
Power Computing	G4
Newtek	G12
New Horizons S/W	G14

FIRST UK SHOWING FOR VIDEO TOASTER

The **Video Toaster**, the Amiga-based video graphics and special effects system that has caused an enormous amount of excitement in the US, will be getting what we believe is its first ever UK public showing at the World of Commodore show.



The Video Toaster is the brainchild of NewTek, one of many American Amiga developers attending the show. The system incorporates both hardware and software and has been greatly in demand from video enthusiasts, video professionals and Amiga fans in the US ever since launch. Rock artiste Todd Rundgren has several, which he uses to create his promo videos.

Although NewTek have no plans to produce a European PAL version in the immediate future, the Video Toaster is bound to be one of the big attractions of the show.

MORE MUSIC FROM MICRODEAL

Microdeal unveil a number of interesting new musical titles, including updates for the Amiga samplers *AMAS* and *Mastersound* in the form of **AMAS 2** and **Stereo Master**, while the exciting **CDTV Remix** (mix your own new versions from tracks on your audio CDs), **Voice Master** and **Joky Karaoke** will all be there for you to have some fun with! Finally, Microdeal are also launching the latest version of their home finance package, **Personal Finance Manager 2**.



AMAS, the Advanced MIDI Amiga Sampler, is to be updated to Version 2: it's one of several new products from Midrodeal to be launched at the Show.

SERENE SCREEN

With the recent explosion in interest in the multimedia area, a new product from top Amiga software and hardware distributors HB Marketing could have arrived just in time. The Edmark **touch screen** will attach to any Amiga monitor screen and allow the control of programs by simply pressing your fingers on the on-screen icons. With a price-tag expected to be under £300, it could be an important part of the Amiga as low-cost multimedia solution.

MUSIC ZONE

Making a big impact on the Amiga music scene, Zone have taken on the entire Dr T's range and will be showing the very latest Amiga sequencer, **KCS v 3.5**, as well as a host of other exciting music releases. Zone are taking on full technical support for **all Dr T products**, as well as supplying the excellent **Bars and Pipes Professional** sequencer, so if you're into music, see 'em!

NEW DIMENSIONS IN SOUND



New Dimensions, makers of the bargain sampler *Technosound*, are releasing a new 12-bit sampler.

New Dimensions are best known as manufacturers of the high-value entry-level sampler Technosound Turbo, still an *Amiga Format* favourite. The big news is that they are now working on a new 12-bit sampler, which is putting them straight in at the top end of the UK sampler market. Currently details of the new sampler are not available (in fact they're top secret), but the new kit may be ready for launch at the show.

ELEPHANT MEN

Some of the major hardware announcements at the Show will be made by Cortex, who are launching their new range of peripherals for the Amiga. The details, however, have yet to be revealed…

BOOK NOW!

One of the largest retailers in computer books, DTBS, have something pretty special for Amiga programmers lined up: the latest, revised versions of the official Commodore-Amiga manuals (the Addison-Wesley series) will be on sale for the first time. This, the third edition, will cover the latest version of AmigaDOS, Version 2.1.

AMOS EVEN EASIER!



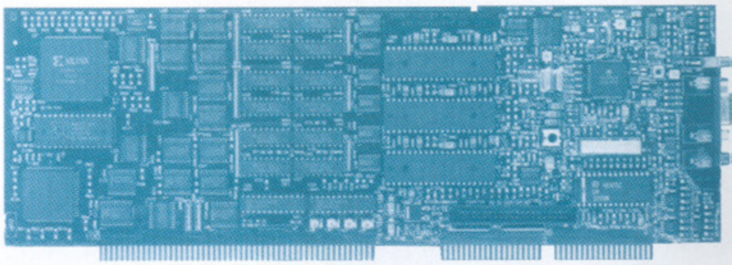
If you're one of those people who has been fascinated by the idea of programming your own stuff with AMOS but daunted by the technicalities, then the new *Easy AMOS* might be made for you.

Yet another big-news launch at the Show is a new, beginners' version of the ultra-simple programming language *AMOS*. **Easy AMOS** is intended to suit those who were daunted by the complexities of programming in *AMOS*, which remains a programming language for all that it simplifies a lot of the heavy routine-writing.

Easy AMOS will be relatively inexpensive (about the price of a game) and come with a specially-written manual to make it as accessible as possible.

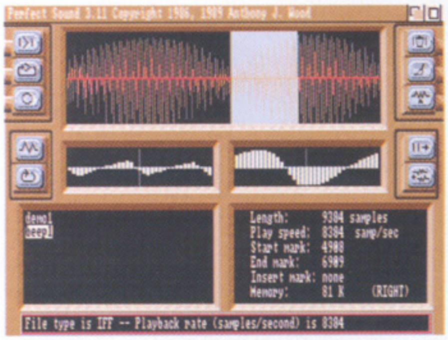
Major launch at the Show in the educational field will be *Fun Scool 4*, the latest version of the top-selling educational package. Expect the new version to remaion true to the pattern of the series, with a separate ackage available for each of three age groups and each one available on all the home computer formats, and probably even CDTV too.

GVP GO 24-BIT



GVP, one of the most famous names in Amiga hardware, will be launching the A3000 PVA (Professional Video Adaptor) in the UK at the World of Commodore. This is a hard card for the 2000 or 3000 which includes 24-bit framebuffer (giving a 16 million colour palette), genlock and TBC as well as coming with 24-bit paint program MacroPaint, 3D modelling software Caligari and the SCALA presentation program. Exciting stuff indeed.

DAWN OF NEW AUDIO ERA



From the makers of *Perfect Sound* comes an exciting new adventure in Amiga audio…

Famed for the *Perfect Sound* sound sampler, Sunrize is a young and energetic company specialising in the most advanced technology available for Amiga music. Their most exciting project of the moment will be seen for the first time in the UK at the Show: the **AD1012 digital audio card** for the Amiga 2000/3000. This is a hard card that allows the recording of music direct to hard disk, based around a 12-bit sampling system running at sample rates of up to 100,000 samples per second. The system is designed to run in mono (four internal channels) but two cards can be run in parallel to give a full stereo system and all the software is designed with this in mind. It's the leading edge of music technology on any home computer and you should not miss it.

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Are you still using a mouse?

When they first appeared, mice were hailed as a godsends - artists now had decent tools to draw pictures with, making it easier than ever before to control their computers. **Asam Ahmad** investigates two other devices designed for information input, the graphics tablet and the trackball.

A MOUSE'S FUNCTION is to control the pointer – usually some sort of arrow on the computer screen – and activate various actions or functions by 'clicking' (pressing the mouse button) when pointing to an icon. A trackball is basically an upside-down mouse. Instead of moving the mouse, you move the ball to control the pointer. This means that a trackball doesn't require any working space except for its own footprint - with a mouse you have to leave room for it to move.Track balls also have the advantage that you don't actually need a desk to use them on at all. In the same way that you can sit back from you Amiga when using a joystick, a trackball gives you the freedom to sit back and admire your work from a distance.

Trackballs use a similar mechanism to that of mice. They are known as opto-mechanical devices because they use light to sense movement. The big ball of the trackball is mounted upon a set of rollers. These rollers are connected to a thin disc with hundreds of tiny slits in it, making it almost see-through. This disc sits in the path of a tiny light beam, and as the disc rotates, the light beam is cut and re-made through the slits in the disc. On the other side of the disc is a small light detector which registers the light passing through it. The circuitry in the trackball then interprets how fast and how far the ball has moved in both the horizontal and vertical directions, and then sends this information to the computer which moves the pointer around on the screen. The resolution of a trackball is similar to that of a mouse at about 200 dpi but the feeling in use is quite different.



Alfa Data TKB-MT-A

Golden Image ■ £39.99

Another model in the Alfa-Data range with the same smooth rounded contoured look and attractive cream colour scheme. This time the trackball comes with three buttons, the standard left and right mouse equivalent buttons, and also a special lock button, which behaves as if you were continuously pressing the left button, almost like an autofire on your mouse! The positioning of the buttons is much better, at least for the left and right buttons.

Otherwise the trackball is very easy to use, with a responsive ball mechanism. For novelty value ALFA DATA also do another version of this trackball, the TKB-MT-AC, this time with a translucent ball that lights up with a different colour depending on which button is pressed. Out of the trackballs, this is my favourite. Changing control method from a mouse takes getting used to, after a while you won't want to change back.

Verdict 86%



Alfa Data TKB-MT

Golden Image ■ £29.99

The TKB-MT is relatively small, as trackballs go. It is well designed, at least aesthetically with nice contoured edges and an attractive colour scheme. In operation the track ball is very easy to use, although the position of the ball above the work surface means there is nowhere to rest your palm, meaning that your hand has to hang in the air a bit. The ball is very easy to control and gives a good response.

Unfortunately the positional layout is not on par with the rest of the trackball's good looks. The trackball buttons are set apart from the ball and often you will find your fingers leaving the buttons – which are very light to the touch – as you try to move the ball around, making for some very frustrating DPaint III sessions. It's a nightmare for left handed people, because of the positioning of the buttons.



Verdict 71%

IT'S ALL VERY well using a mouse to control a computer, selecting icons etc. in a GUI (Graphical User Interface) like workbench, but to actually input data, it is rather lacking. It is not exactly very easy to draw a picture with a mouse. Graphics Tablets are intended to be a solution to the problem. The main usage area for tablets is the CAD (Computer Aided Design) market. Indeed two of the three tablets reviewed came with templates for AutoCAD, one of the biggest and best supported CAD programs on the PC market. Trying to use a tablet for workbench takes a lot of getting used to, as there is a tendancy to lift up the pen and continue to move it in the hope that the pointer will carry on from where you left it, like one often does with a mouse. This of course is not the case, as a tablet uses absolute addressing - top right on the tablet is top right on the screen. However, using tablets for something like DPaint III really shows how useful they can be with freehand drawing becoming a realistic possibility. Graphics tablets aren't cheap though, so look carefully at which is most suited to your needs.

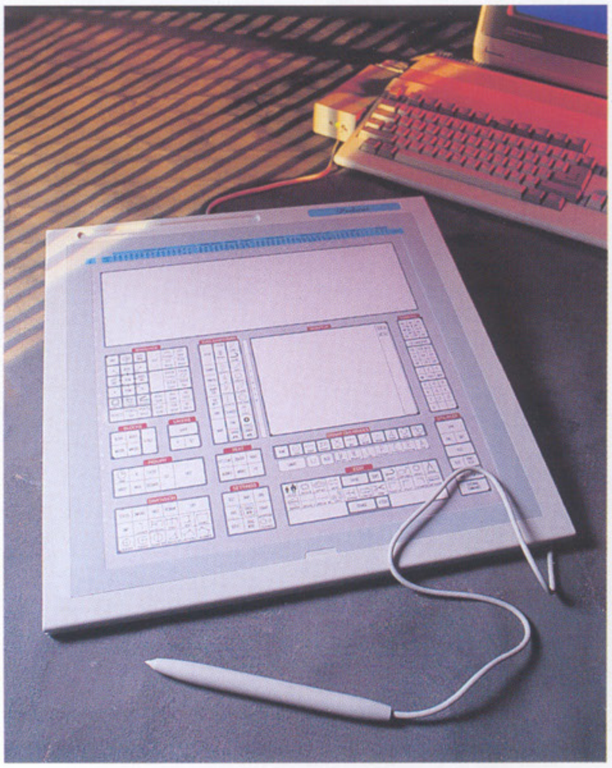
A tablet consists of a very fine criss-cross of wires. It operates by sequentially switching constant current pulses through the grid, alternating between the X and Y conductors to determine the position of the stylus as it is moved across the active area. The stylus detects the electromagnetic field emanating from the conductor matrix and has a voltage induced into it. The tablet takes care of all the information processing, all the time and positional data and sends this to the Amiga via the serial port. The typical resolution of a tablet is an amazingly accurate 1000 dpi.

Podscat PT-3030

£178.80 ■ HB Marketing

AProDraw Driver ■ £51.03

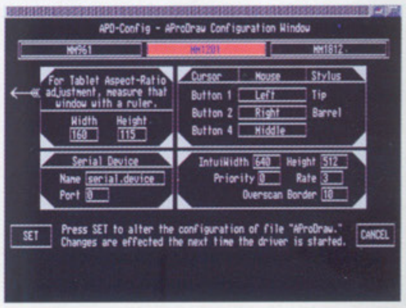
Cursor/puck device ■ £23.50



Of the three tablets supplied, this was the only one that didn't come with it's own driver, which has to be purchased separately. The Podscat tablet is a fairly large digitiser, with an active area of about a square foot, but not so large to be heavy and unmanageable and require too much desk space. The unit is supplied with a simple stylus with two small buttons, which was the easiest to draw with out of the three (but not as good as the puck that came with the Cherry). The manual is a small pamphlet style affair, the kind that has all the information you require, but not presented to you in an instantly accessible form.

Installing the unit was the most tricky and difficult of them all, but once you have set the tablet up to your preferences, the program saves a customised version of the driver onto your disk, so that the next time you use the program, there's no messing around.

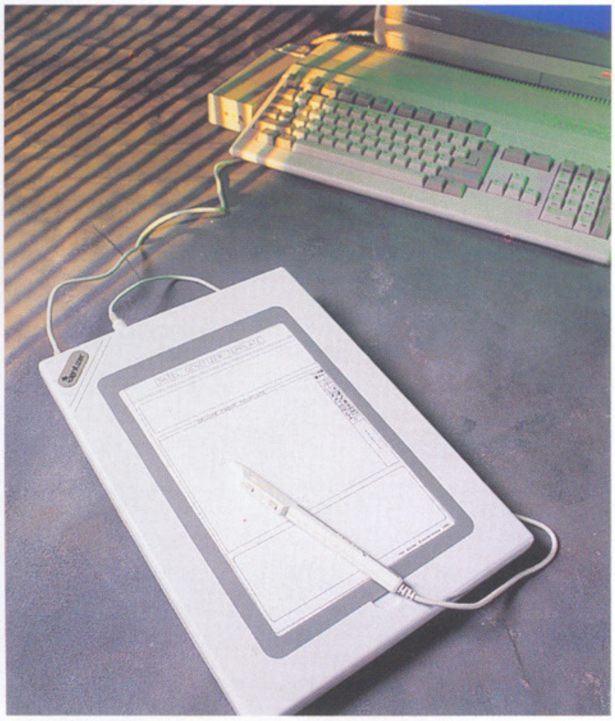
The pen is nice and responsive, making it easy to control the tablet, with very light



Once all the equipment is set up, the unit must be configured correctly. For this, you need to buy the appropriate driver programs separately.

Genitizer GT-906

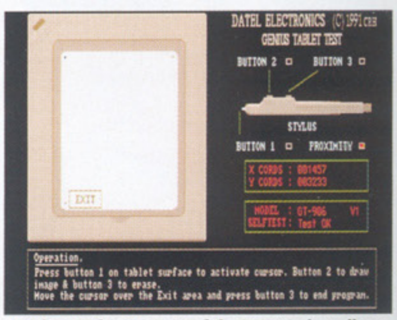
£129.99 ■ Datel Electronics



This is the smallest of the tablets reviewed here. The tablet is well built and sturdy, just larger than the size of an A4 pad. The active area, where all the control takes place, is only 9 by 6 inches, but this is fully adequate for most purposes. The unit plugs into the Amiga's serial port, and is supplied with everything required to do this. One thing you will need though, is a two to three pin plug converter, as the unit is supplied with a two pin european style mains adaptor to provide the tablet with power. The manual is a decent size, with most of the information you will require, except for installation instructions. The tablet, or at least the manual is supplied for the PC-Compatible market, and refers the those machines extensively. For installation DATEL provide a covering sheet with brief but adequate instructions and a disk.

Once all the equipment is set up, the unit must be installed. For this, DATEL provide two programs. The first program, called Tablet, is basically a test program. On the screen it shows a pictorial representation of the tablet, along with various bits of data, such as the current stylus coordinates, and the state of the buttons, whether pressed or not. This is just to make sure that all the functions are working properly. The second program on the disk is the actual driver. Rather than a new device that has to be mounted, the tablet is automatically configured by simply running this program. This makes installation very easy, just by adding one line to your startup-sequence, to load in the tablet. Unfortunately, as the tablet is using the serial port, you cannot use things like modems etc. until you disconnect the tablet, and uninstall the driver by running the program again.

In use, the tablet is very responsive. The stylus is a two button affair, with both the standard mouse buttons being emulated by the pen. Their positions are a bit strange at first, and drawing can be a little tricky, but this is easy to master after a bit. For drawing purposes, a template for DPaint is supplied. This template is just a piece of paper that lies on the tablet, with a picture of the DPaint screen. This allows you to control DPaint from the tablet without having to look at the screen all the time - at



Datel provide a very useful program that allows you to check that everything is working.

being pressure required to activate it. The rate of data processing is also very good, with the pointer keeping up with the stylus at all times, excellent for any budding Rolf Harris.

This tablet, despite the complex setting up procedure was actually the most pleasurable to use, with a very ergonomic design - big enough for large pictures or detail drawing, but not too heavy on the desk space, just right for casual professional use. An excellent value for money tablet, that rivals the Cherry for accuracy. Additionally, the ability to buy just the tablet and add the cursor/puck device later if you want, makes the Podscat a good buy for anyone who wants to start with a basic system and build up later.

Podscat PT-3030

SPEED ●●●●
It keeps up well with your stylus. Can't ask for much more.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
An adequate manual, but not very descriptive, with only bare information.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
A complex set up procedure that only has to be done once thankfully.

FEATURES ●●●●
Just about all you could ask for. Has the facility to take a cursor as well.

VALUE ●●●●
Excellent specification for a very modest and value for money price.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **86%**

least that is the theory: you have to look at the screen anyway to make sure that your actions have been carried out. One thing that is really annoying however, is the amount of space on the tablet that is actually used. The template uses only about half of the useable workspace, leaving the rest redundant. This means that it is only possible to digitise (trace) pictures around the size of a standard postcard. This can be very restrictive, but is still much better than a mouse.

Genitizer GT-906

SPEED ●●●●
Doesn't lag behind your actions, keeps up with your movements at all times.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
Not really designed for the Amiga, but vital information is in the manual or covering sheet.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●
Very easy to set up, and good testing software means painless installation.

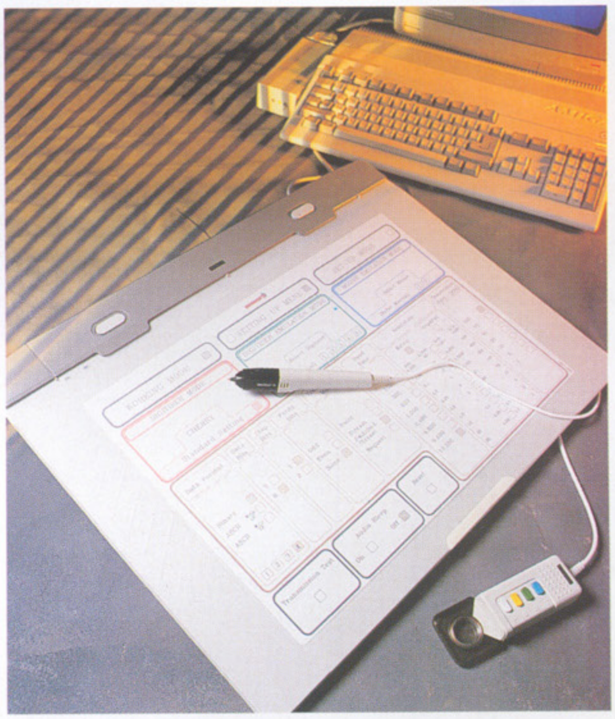
FEATURES ●●
Just a basic entry level tablet, with no bells or whistles.

VALUE ●●●
All in all a good tablet that works well for a modest price.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **73%**

Cherry MK.IV Tablet

£450 ■ Cherry Electrical Products



Some say that the best things come in small packages. This is certainly not true in this case. The Cherry MkIV digitiser is one hell of a tablet. With a massive A3 size active area, the tablet requires a lot of desk space. The unit is built very well and has a very strong sturdy feel to it. It is supplied with an A5 size manual with clear instructions on all aspects of the tablet, including tablet set-up instructions, although most of the information contained is on the technical aspects of the tablet. This time the tablet is supplied with a four-button cursor (a mouse-like object also referred to as a puck) and a single-button stylus. Installing the unit was not too difficult, although there was a problem in that the interface has a 9-pin 'D' type socket connector, meaning you will need a 9-25 serial adaptor to get it working. This of course means my modem has to go walkies again...

The supplied program disk contains small documentation files to help with installation, which basically involves running a simple program that can be installed in your startup-sequence. Instead of just installing itself in the background, the program opens a small window on the workbench screen, which allows you to select the current control method (puck or stylus) and, best of all, define the amount of the active tablet area that is used for screen drawing. This is an excellent feature. What this means is that the whole A3 area could represent the screen, meaning that large pictures can be traced for very accurate work, or you could set the screen area to a small section anywhere on the tablet for use when using workbench or tracing a small picture. Setting a small area for workbench use has it's advantages, mainly in that you don't have to move your hand around a massive A3 area just to access a menu or an icon on the edge of the workbench screen.

In use, the Cherry tablet is a dream to use. The four button puck is excellent, providing very accurate feedback. But four buttons? Well the first two are the standard left and right mouse equivalents, the other two, controlled by some excellent driver software, behave as Left-Amiga-N and Left-Amiga-M buttons, which allow you to switch screens by pressing the relevant buttons on the puck. This can be extremely useful, meaning that your hands don't have to leave the tablet to go and multitask between workbench and DPaint or whatever else you're using. The driver is so good that it can also handle a stylus - nothing special about that until you realise that it only has one button. The driver treats the button in a different way, according to which zone your mouse pointer is in. So if the pointer is within the top 12 pixels on the screen, the button is automatically treated as a right mouse button, to allow you to select menu options, and treated as a left mouse button to draw with on the rest of the screen. "Ah! But what about the screen gadgets?" I hear you cry. Well, the nice people at Cherry thought of this and defined more zones for the gadgets so that the button behaves as a left mouse button and you can flip screens or shut them down. Very clever.

Despite it's size, the tablet is very well designed, with a neat slim-line look, and the customary cream/beige colour styling. A dream to use with very little to fault it, the puck is an excellent piece of kit, and so easy to draw with, following the contours of a picture using the cross hairs on the cursor. The pen did have a small problem though, in that the screen pointer wasn't always stable, when the stylus was, but otherwise functionally excellent with a very ergonomic design, better than that of the other pens. As an added bonus, serious Amiga users who use X-Cad Professional, have a special driver specifically designed for them to make using X-Cad easier.

All in all we were impressed by all three tablets we looked at. The Genitizer is truly excellent value for money; the Podscat allows you to start cheaply and build your system up later, and the Cherry, well that's just the best tablet we've ever used.

Cherry Mk IV Tablet

SPEED ●●●●
As fast as a tablet should be, even when the area is set to full A3.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
A good manual with loads of installation/set-up instructions and techie bits.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
Tricky to set-up at first, mainly because it is very controllable. Loading the driver is easy though.

FEATURES ●●●●
Everything that you would probably need, with a puck and a stylus. It even has a built-in buzzer.

VALUE ●●●●
An excellent digitiser for the user with more professional needs.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **91%**



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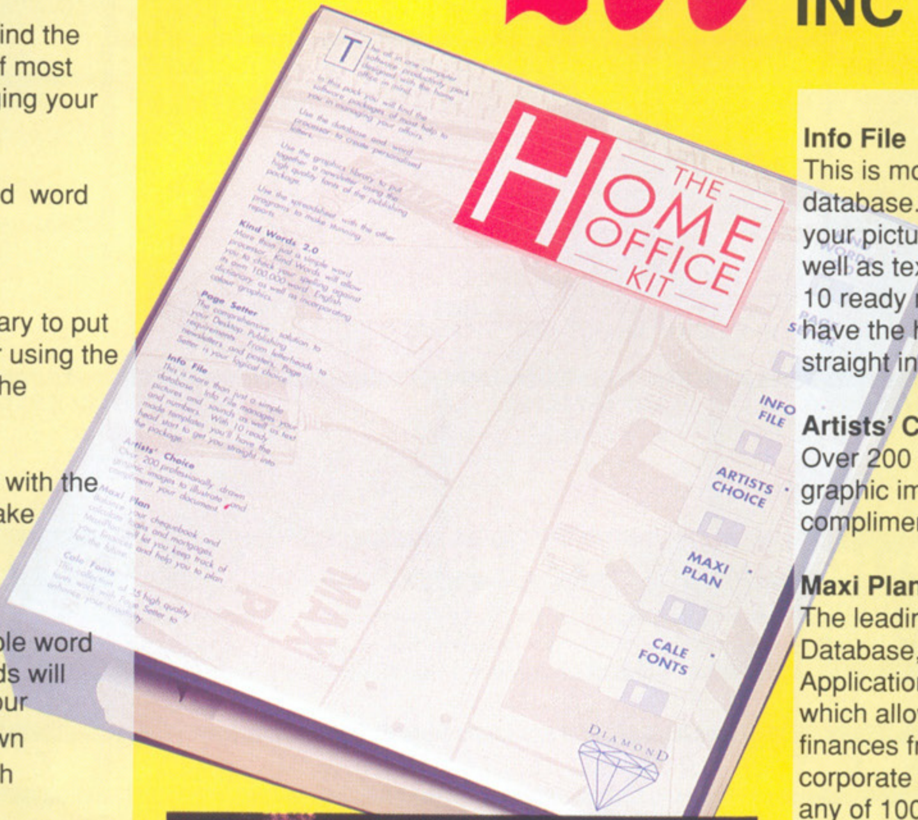
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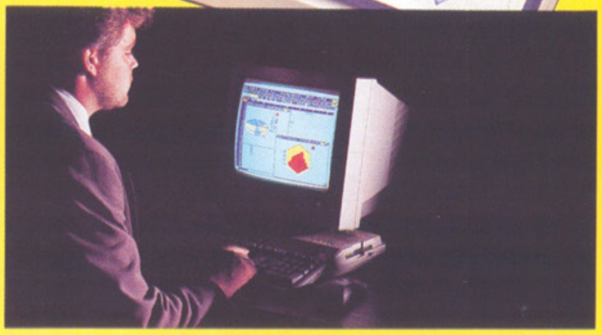
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The Big Deal

More and more hard drives are coming onto the market for the A500. **Pat McDonald** checks out the whole scene

THERE YOU ARE, working away on your 1Mb Amiga with a floppy drive, finishing your latest project. You finish it, try to save it to disk, and find out that there's not enough space on the disk. What do you do?

You've had to turn off Workbench to fit the job in memory and you can't get back to it without losing your work. No blank floppy disks – oh dear, you have to turn off and start again, swearing blindly that you'll always have blank floppies to hand...

Don't kid yourself. The best way to avoid situations like this is to work on an Amiga with a hard disk and some extra memory. Have Workbench running all the time, in case you need to do something like format a disk or check on a virus. The Amiga is a multi-tasking computer, but to get the best out of it you need as much memory as you can afford, both for the computer itself and for storing information more permanently.

Most up-to-date hard disks supply these needs and more: lots of space for storage, plus extra memory for your computer. They save and load information much, much quicker than a floppy: a speed increase of fourfold is slow for a hard disk. They also much improve Workbench, making it faster and easier to work with. In a nutshell, they can beef up your standard A500 to something that's a dream.

You know the standard Workbench disk that came with your Amiga? Imagine for a moment that it's grown tremendously, to 20Mb capacity or more. Imagine that you can store all those useful programs you have that are currently scattered on dozens of floppies. Imagine just switching your machine on and being able to use them all, rather than having to rummage through your floppy collection and waiting a minute for it to load.

There's more that you can store. People who use programs like Deluxe Paint IV or Professional Page typically need to have lots of different fonts available. Storing them on floppies, you could easily have four or five different font sets (perhaps 3Mb or more of different fonts). This isn't mentioning things like clip art or saved work – with a hard drive, you can put all the files and programs you need in one place.

How about printers? Usually, if you're using floppies, you have to copy the correct printer driver onto each floppy disk, set the printer you want with Preferences on each floppy disk, and then you're ready – it's bad news if you have twenty or more disks to do this on. If all your programs are on a hard disk, you copy the printer driver onto the hard disk, set Preferences – and all the programs can access your printer.

It's fairly important to be mature when thinking about hard disks. Having 20Mb (or lots, lots more) means a little discipline is needed to arrange everything to work as you want it. This is quite an important point to consider before you even get one.

Take, for example, emulators. Most PC and Macintosh emulators let you reserve part of a hard disk for use by the different operating systems (so most of it's Amiga compatible, but there's some space for PC/Mac programs and data). This is called partitioning, splitting and arranging the hard disk to suit your needs.

All the hard disks here will do that sort of thing, but the ease varies tremendously, depending on the set-up software supplied with the hardware. With every hard disk comes a floppy (or more), containing programs to set up the hard disk from scratch or split parts off for different jobs. Of course, user friendliness and power varies from hard disk to hard disk, as they are – mostly – from different manufacturers.

The plus point is that AmigaDOS is very flexible about such arrangements and many other customizing tasks. It's fairly easy to arrange things so that your machine plays a sample or shows an animation as it's starting up – a class above a robot saying hello. It's probably true to say that, of all the Amiga hard disks in use around the world, no two are exactly identical – you match them to your needs, so they are as individual as people.

Hard disks need to be well maintained, because they are quite complex devices. If you know how to modify a startup-sequence, then you're off to a good start – but there's a few more difficult tasks to make sure that your hard disk stays in working order.

The most important item is a virus checker. At Amiga Format we have ZeroVirus III (a widely available PD program, written by Jonathan Potter) which monitors floppy disks going into and out of the drive all the time. Even if a disk is suspect (it may or may not have a virus) the program will jump to the front and warn you, which saves many an embarrassment.

Viruses are not too much of a problem. Of the 153 strains, few of them will recognize and attack a hard disk. The worst that usually happens is that they overwrite the boot track on a hard disk, which means you have to use the system software floppy to resuscitate it. Having ZeroVirus III going all the time from start-up will eliminate the possibility.

All the same, it's a good idea to make a back-up every so often, just in case the whole hard drive decides to die (rare but possible). With floppies, this is easy – just copy the disk and use the copy. Hard disks have a much greater capacity than floppies, though, which means you need a program and a large stack of floppies to put all the information onto. Look for programs like Mr Backup, Superback, Quarterback and HDBackup.

CBM A590

Commodore ■ £289

Evesham Micros (0386 765500)

Commodore's official 20Mb offering has always been a bone of contention. Thanks to the usual circular logic of a successful product, because it's the most popular hard drive (due to its price and the fact it's "official") many people buy them, but don't be tempted to follow the herd for those reasons.

For one thing it's a painfully slow hard drive. Waiting around for it to start going is a beard growing experience. Similarly, clicking on a directory brings up a window listing the icons – eventually. It's faster than a floppy drive, true, but doesn't compare well with other hard drives for speed.

Another factor to consider is that they do tend to crash the machine for no good reason. Again, this sounds really bad, but expansions and add-ons do sometimes place something of a strain on the Amiga. Nevertheless, there are definitely more incompatibility problems associated with the A590 than with any other hard drive.

The good points are that the set-up software is quite good, and the manual will give you some landmarks and hints on setting it up. Getting started with it is not too bad. You can add extra memory to the unit (for use by the computer) – up to 2MB, which is good. Also, the device has a SCSI controller and connector for plugging in SCSI devices.

Although not as well contoured as some other hard drives, the A590 does have the basic styling of the A500. It comes with a separate power supply unit (PSU) which is very similar to the standard A500 power supply, so there shouldn't be that many problems with adding other equipment like floppy drives, genlocks, extra memory expansions and so on.

All things considered, the A590 is not the hard drive that it should be. It works, it is better than using floppies, but due to some built-in flaws you will have more problems than with other types. It's not particularly recommended, but at £289 itis one of the cheapest hard drives on the market.



CBM A590

SPEED ●●
Much slower than most hard drives

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
Good on the basics, little technical information

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
Not the simplest hard drive to customize

FEATURES ●●●
2MB of extra memory, external SCSI devices

VALUE ●●●●
Well, at least it's relatively cheap

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **69%**

INTERFACE REQUIRED

The Amiga was not really designed to have a hard disk attached – that's why there's no socket on the back to plug hard disks into. Instead, they have extra circuitry to interface hard disk units to the computer system.

That's one reason why they cost so much. Bare hard disks (just the bit that actually stores and retrieves data) can be bought for as little as £150. Buying one is a waste of time without a hard disk controller, which is built into all the hard drives reviewed here.

Do bear in mind though, that it's perfectly possible to replace a hard disk unit with a similar type with more storage area – for instance, Evesham Micros (0386 765500) will replace the 20MB drive of the A590 with a 40MB one.

HOW SMART?

Using a hard drive that's been formatted and set up is mostly very easy. Workbench is a point and click WIMP system that really is a snap until you come across a piece of software that doesn't know how to behave with a hard disk. Then the hassle begins, because although hard disks are easy to use, they're not particularly easy to set up in the first place...

Getting around such problems is usually fairly easy – see the Workbench section in this issue for an example. But if you've never used Shell at all before you've got a hard disk, expect to learn pretty fast or you'll feel a bit limited. The good news is that, because all disk operations are speeded up, learning is much faster (you can do many more experiments and exercises for a given amount of time.

GVP Impact II

Great Valley Products ■ £499

Silica (081 309 1111)

Regular readers will no doubt be aware of the high regard I have for GVP's products as a whole and this drive in particular. Although fairly expensive, the hard drive is manufactured to very high standards and a lot of thought has gone into the design from an early stage.

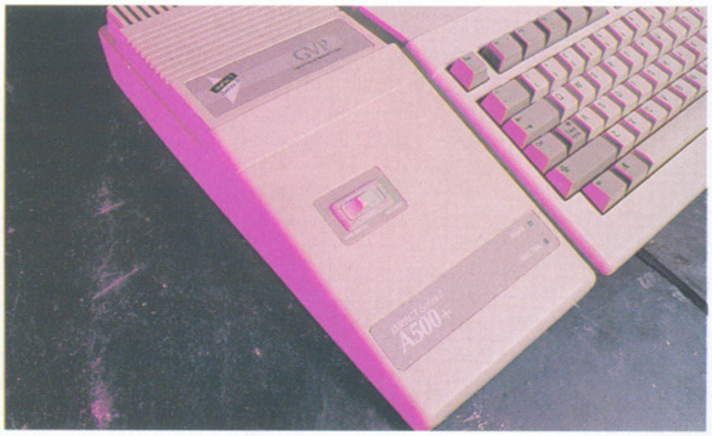
For a start, the shape and colour closely matches the standard A500. Conveniently situated at the front is a switch to either enable or disable the hard drive (you'd want to disable it to play autobooting games: the switch positions are labelled "autoboot" and "game", which shows that GVP have a fair idea of the Amiga community's needs and desires).

The unit has four SIMM (Single Inline Memory Module) connectors, so adding up to 4MB of memory is easy enough, and for those who need more a different SIMM type is available, which lets you have the full 8MB of external extra memory. A SCSI connector is built into the back, and GVP do support extra SCSI devices. In addition, a separate dedicated power supply is supplied as standard.

The set-up software (FaastPrep) has two ways of operating, automatic or manual. Automatic is useful when you first get the drive – it hides a lot of the customization options available under the manual version. So you don't have to know every bell and whistle to get the thing working.

In terms of performance, the drive is the fastest available, both in terms of starting up (rebooting is managed in just a few seconds) and also for usage – windows open very fast and program loading and saving is virtually instantaneous. Minimum drive size is 50MB, although larger sizes are available. Crashes and incompatibility problems are very rare – a very reliable drive indeed and a joy to use.

The only slight let-down is the documentation. It's pretty comprehensive, but it strikes me as a bit thin and lacking in detailed explanations for the complete beginner. Mind you, the set-up software is explained pretty well, and GVP's technical support is very good if you're prepared to telephone America at odd times, so it's unlikely to stop you from getting the drive going. All in all, – and despite more recent arrivals on the A500 hard drive scene – the Impact 2 is still the best hard drive.



GVP Impact 2

SPEED ●●●●●
The zip factor is the highest here

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
Quite technical, a bit muddled in places

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●●
Set-up software is very easy to use

FEATURES ●●●●
Everything except a through connector

VALUE ●●●●
It is expensive, but worth the extra.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **92%**

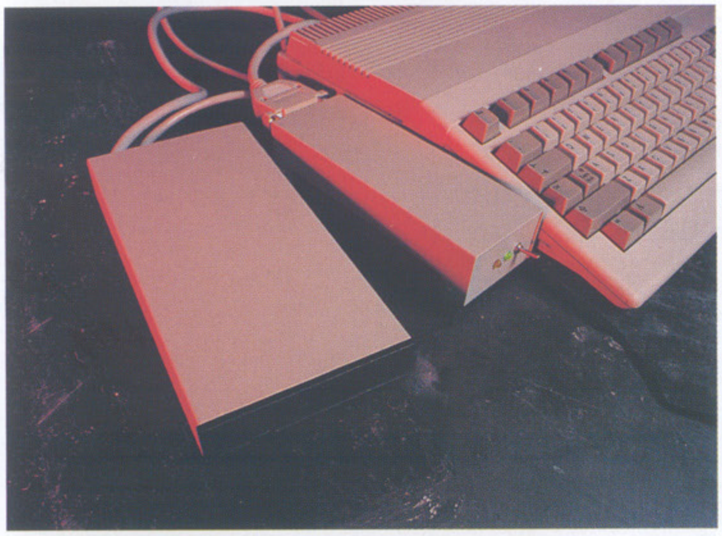
Oktagon 500

BSC ■ £249 interface only – £499 with 52Mb drive.

Gasteiner (081 365 1151)

This is the first hard drive to reach our offices from Germany, where we understand the Amiga to be thriving. It shows off a number of novelties, and so is perhaps the hardest to judge.

It consists of a box which goes on the left hand side of the computer – nothing special so far. At the back of the box are two connectors, one SCSI and one for power. The hard drive unit itself sits on your desk, and is about the same size as an external floppy disk unit. So the whole thing is pretty small by hard disk standards.



You can't plug extra memory into the box, and it has no through port for connecting memory expansion boxes like the SupraRAM 500RX or the Cortex unit. These do have through ports however, so it's not really a problem.

In use it's very interesting. Bsc have put a lot of effort into designing software that can do just about anything. For starters, after partitioning the drive you can protect a partition from being accessed by typing a password – people without the password will be unable to access the information in that partition. This is just one example, there are many different layers to the complexity of using the Oktagon.

The only snag is the manual. It's very, very technical, and can prove totally baffling at first sight. The reasons for this are twofold: first, it was written for the ALF3 controller, which is another hard disk made by the same company for the A2000/A1500. I understand that a separate Oktagon manual will be produced shortly.

The second reason why the manual is so wonderful but so poor is that it's translated from a German original text. It really could do with retranslating, as some of the passages in it are long, dark and full of mystery.

There's no extra PSU or memory potential, but as a SCSI controller the Oktagon really is second to none and fast enough not to keep you waiting. Good luck with the manual – although the new one could be available by the time you read this.

Oktagon 500

SPEED Good enough for most people	●●●●
DOCUMENTATION Not total gibberish, but it gets close	●●
ACCESSIBILITY The set-up software is up to the task and more	●●●●
FEATURES Just a hard drive with no frills	●●●
VALUE Reasonable, considering the software	●●●●

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **80%**

You may get the impression that setting up a hard drive is not particularly easy, and you're right. Sometimes the software is very subtle as to what to do next, and sometimes the manuals are very difficult to read (usually because it's for both A500 and A2000 versions of the same system). Luckily, you'd be hard pressed to buy a hard drive that wasn't set up at the factory, to help start you off. But do expect to tinker with them, to customize your system to do exactly what you want.

SCSI FOR MOST

You couldn't help but notice the acronym SCSI bandied about on these pages. SCSI is simply a way of wiring a plug – the letters stand for Small Computer Systems Interface, and offers a standard way of connecting units like hard drives, scanners, tape streamers and networking between computers of different makes.

For instance, if you were interested in having a removable hard drive (like a floppy, except that the disks can store 45MB of information each) then you could quite easily do this simply by plugging a cable from the removable hard drive into the back of a SCSI controller. Formatting and using it from Workbench would be quite easy, although this varies from system to system.

There is an argument which says that you don't really need a SCSI connector on the back of the hard drive – after all, it's not that easy to actually use 40 or 50MB of disk space. On the other hand, if you want a second hard disk unit (or other SCSI unit) then it's nice to have the potential to expand.

FastTrak

Xetec ■ £599

Third Coast (0257 472444)

Just when you think you've seen everything under the sun, along comes another hard disk. The Xetec comes in two parts (like the Oktagon). An interface box plugs into the side of your machine, while the main hard disk sits in a massive box placed anywhere you want. The supplied cable is long enough to get the hard disk four or five feet away, which should be sufficient.

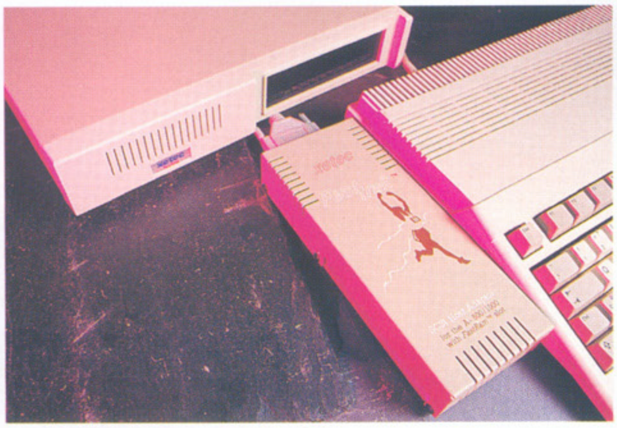
The box which the hard disk sits in is about the size of a briefcase, and has a built-in power supply. Plug the whole lot together and off you go. The set-up software is good enough – some might call it simplistic, but I'd prefer to call it easy to use.

Getting to grips with the detail is not quite so easy, mainly due to the manuals. Although easy to read, they don't really give enough hard information – you're left with the feeling that you've been given enough to use it and no more.

In use, the system was quite rugged, although the hard drive would occasionally forget things. Rather than damn the whole unit, I put this down to the review model. The Xetec is available with a Quantum drive, which should improve the reliability no end.

Should you require some extra memory, a card is available for the unit which can be expanded to give 8MB of expansion memory. Nice if you can afford, but surely at this price it would have made sense to include it as standard. If you want, it's possible to put a second hard disk into the same box, and this can either be a SCSI or AT/ST506 type.

Xetec are one of the few companies who will supply tape streamers should you require it. A tape streamer is a device to backup your hard disk onto magnetic tape – it saves a lot of floppy swapping for backups. If you compare this older design to the Oktagon, you will notice many similarities, and I really must say that the Xetec loses out for the most part. Sure, you can have extra memory if you want it – but



FastTrak

SPEED Distinctly average in the review model	●●
DOCUMENTATION Quite clear, not enough to read	●●●
ACCESSIBILITY Software's quite easy, connections are a snap	●●●●●
FEATURES Connects SCSI and ST506, but no extra memory	●●●●
VALUE Looking a bit overpriced in today's market	●●

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **82%**

Novia 30i

ICD ■ £399

Power Computing (0253 734218)

If you don't like the idea of having a great box plugged into the side of your A500, then an internal hard drive could well be more appealing. These handy little devices (reviewed last issue) give you the storage space without taking up any desk space.

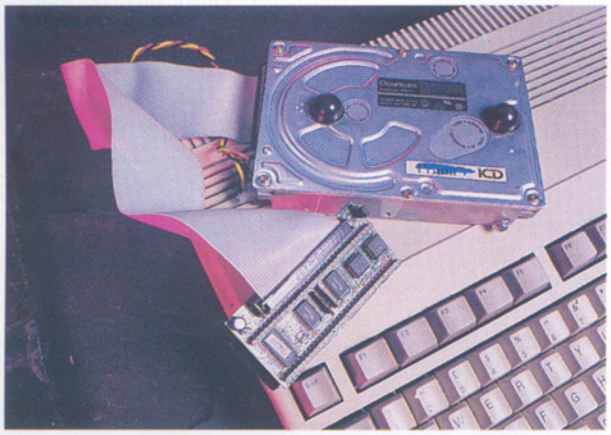
Of course, to get one inside your Amiga you do have to take all the screws out and disassemble it. Take out the 68000 processor chip, plug in a board to the empty socket, and plug the chip in the top of the board. Put the hard drive into the case, attach it with the supplied sticky pads (how tacky) and you're there – a difficult job for a beginner, but not impossible.

Of course, because the drive is internal then there are no expansion options – no extra memory, no SCSI connector. Just a hard drive (the Novia is available in 20MB and 30MB sizes).

Firing up and getting started is pretty easy. The supplied software is a good, no-nonsense formatting program – it lacks many of the options similar programs (because there's no SCSI connector) but is fine for partitioning and organization.

The manual is a bit of a let-down, though. It's part of a section of the tome, which means that there's a lot of extraneous information about different products. Oh well, at least the software's easy enough.

In use, the Novia is about average – it does work a little faster than, say, an A590 or similar. Having said that, it does tend to slow down when dealing with very large files. There's no extra power supply, the unit draws all it needs from the Amiga's own power rails. It doesn't appear to need a lot, and crashes are rare.



Novia 30i

SPEED ●●●
Acceptably fast, not awe-inspiring

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
Not specific enough to the product

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●
Setup software is good, if a bit confusing at first

FEATURES ●●●●
No memory, no SCSI, but no extra box either

VALUE ●●●
Not particularly amazing

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **73%**

GAPING HOLES

It's odd, but considering the number of hard drives which have a SCSI connector at the back, very little is readily available to actually plug into them. I dare say that 80-90% of such hard drives have a part which is never used because very few people sell devices to plug into them.

Such hardware (removable cartridge hard disks, read/write magneto-optical CD drives, tape streamers) are manufactured, by companies such as Ricoh, Benoulli, SyQuest and others. However, the only hard disks which have the system software to cope are the GVP, Oktagon 500 and the Xetec.

NOT A HARD DRIVE

And while we're on the subject of SCSI drives, it's not neccessary to have a dedicated Amiga500 hard drive to increase your storage levels. By using a SCSI interface such as the Oktagon 500, you can (in theory) add more than just hard drives. We've tried removable hard drives, but tape drives, optical drives and the like can all be connected directly into your A500. More interestingly, you can now plug any cheap SCSI hard disk into your A500. So start scouring those auction rooms.

One other point – why has no one made a SCSI ports network system for the Amiga? It would be fast, and ideal where more than one Amiga is working together in the same place.

Prima 105

ICD ■ £499

Power Computing (0253 734218)

This is a very similar design to the Novia, but differs in certain important respects. It has a much larger capacity – apart from the 100MB version reviewed here, it's also available in a 50MB size. So it's definitely a cut above the Novia.

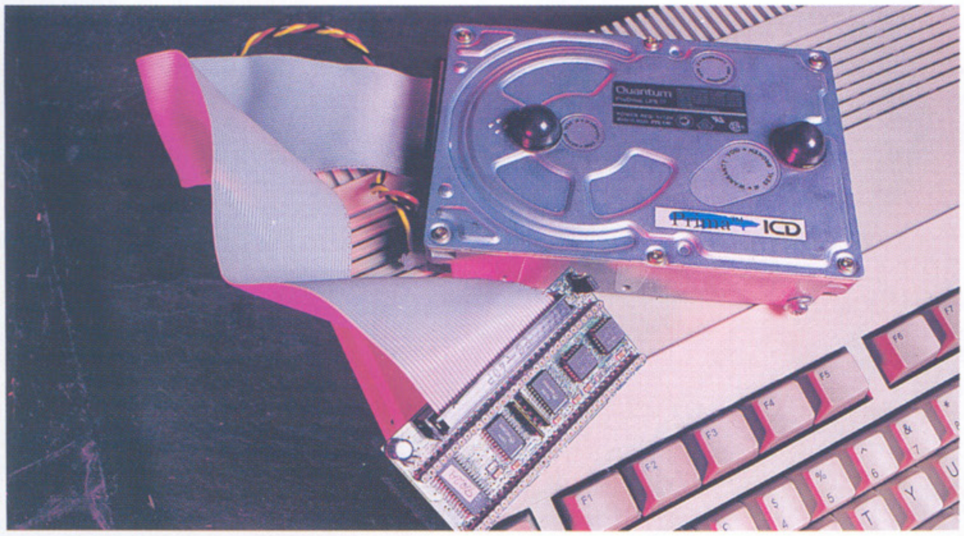
Rather than the hard drive sitting nowhere in particular inside the computer, the Prima drive can be firmly secured to the area normally occupied by the internal disk drive. Of course, if it goes there (and I would recommend it as hard drives should be anchored to something) then you have to remove the internal drive first. Which leads us to the question, "how do you use floppies?".

ICD do supply a solution to the problem. It's called the Shuffleboard, and it shuffles down all floppy drive numbers by one. So DF1, normally the first internal drive, becomes DF0, and so on for any other external drives. So you can still use floppy disks, but only if you have at least one external floppy drive.

Incidentally, the Shuffleboard plugs into the Amiga in a similar manner to the controller. Rather than the 68000 slot, it uses the Even CIA chip: but the principle is exactly the same. Remove the chip, plug in the board, plug the chip into the top of the board.

The Prima has one disadvantage over the Novia – the documentation is even worse. Spread around a few sheets of paper and a flyer for the Shuffleboard, it takes a while to find the parts that you need to read. Still, it is all (just about) there.

The good news is that, once you've been to all the bother of getting it working, the Prima is fast. It compares very well with the GVP, and does provide a stable platform to work with: that is, it doesn't crash often. Add the capacity (a nice 50MB or 100MB) and the Prima is worth considering, and is definitely superior to the Novia. A shame that you require an extra floppy drive though.



Prima 105

SPEED ●●●●●
Compares very well with all the others

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
Not wonderful – just good enough

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
An external floppy drive essential

FEATURES ●●●●
The most discrete, usable hard drive

VALUE ●●●
Plus an extra floppy drive, not cheap

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **82%**

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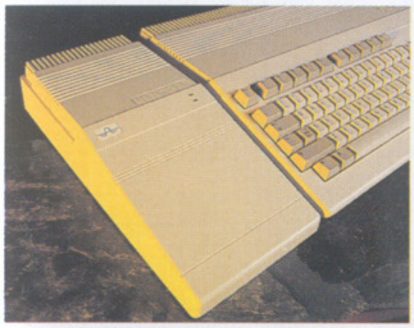
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NEW CONTENDER



Hard on the heels of this hard drive feature, Roctec have announced a new hard drive. Contoured like a GVP, it can be expanded up to 8MB of memory. It will be available both in SCSI and AdIDE (ST506) versions, the primary differences being speed and cost.

We've tested it hands-on, though not sufficiently for this review. Even the base AdIDE version was pretty good – much faster than an A590. It comes with a power supply as standard. The most excellent news though is the price: expect to pay around £300 for the base model. Hopefully, the Roctec drive will be available shortly from Silica (081 309 1111). Watch out for the full review in the coming month or two.

Also promised beofre Christmas is an updated version of Evesham Micros popular Reference 40, and a new unit GVP-style hard drive from the German company, Protar.

IVS Trumpcard

IVS ■ £399.99

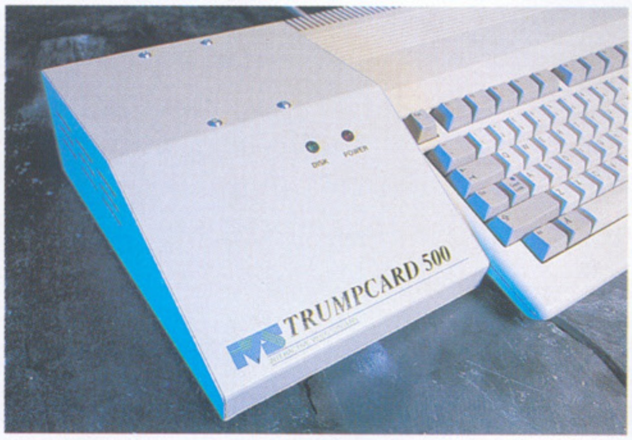
Third Coast Technologies

This is an odd and old design, and sports one facility that no other hard drive has – it can be fitted to the A500 or the A2000/A1500! This is done by simulating an A2000 Style Zorro II connector inside the box – if you ever upgrade to an A2000/A1500, just take the case off the hard drive, unplug the card, and plug it into your new computer. Neat, but only really useful for a very few.

The manual is very well illustrated, and guides you through the installation procedure with the least possible amount of head scratching. The software is a bit like a check list – just work down it from Number One onwards and you'll end up with a hard drive.

In use, the main flaw of the Trumpcard soon manifests itself – it's about as fast as an A590, maybe a little quicker. It certainly takes a long time to boot itself up. The base unit does not have any extra memory, but these can be bought separately – the memory card can take up to 4MB of RAM. Similarly, the unit does not come with its own PSU as standard, although it does have a connector to take one. In use, power consumption is not too heavy – a standard Amiga can cope quite happily, and an extra 2Mb of memory caused no problems.

It's an ugly hard drive, with rudimentary styling but it's great strength is that it's really reliable – we played around with it quite extensively for a couple of months and although it crashed once or twice due to viruses, the data was always secure on the disk. A hard drive you can trust.



IVS Trumpcard	
SPEED Definitely not its best feature	●●
DOCUMENTATION Very easy to read, not too technical	●●●●
ACCESSIBILITY Fairly easy to set up as you want	●●●●
FEATURES Most are optional extras	●●●●
VALUE Too much cash for what you get	●●●
AMIGA FORMAT Verdict	66%

SupraDrive 500XP

Supra Corparation ■ £XX

Surface UK Ltd (081 566 6677)



Supra are a similar company to GVP – they produce a range of Amiga peripherals. It's not surprising, given the competing nature, that the SupraDrive has a similar specification to the GVP.

It's a SCSI based drive, with a connector at the back for extra expansion. Up to the full 8Mb of extra RAM can be added, although a 2Mb system is more usual. The reason is that it doesn't use SIMM modules. Instead, you plug normal RAM chips into the unit and set some jumpers. 4 X 256 type chips will give 2Mb maximum (or a minimum of 512K) while using the more expensive 4 X 1MB chips lets you have 8MB tops.

No power supply is supplied (can't we fit another 'supply' in this sentence - Ed), although it will take an A590 power supply (oh, good - Ed). If you don't have one, it draws power from the computer itself. The shape of the unit is best described as interesting: once fitted, it's at an offset to the computer, and doesn't attempt to look like part of the Amiga at all.

The best parts of this drive are the set-up software and the manual. The set-up software is very easy to use and quite comprehensive, easy enough for the beginner and powerful enough for the more experienced user. Better still, the manual is excellent, and provides many answers to common questions.

Bundled with the drive comes SuperBack, a good hard disk backup utility which is (unfortunately) Shell based. That's got it's own manual, again well written and detailed. The final thoughtful feature is a through port, for connecting other peripherals onto the computer system – it's the only hard drive with this feature. However, there are few peripherals that this works with – memory expansions cause no grief, but other equipment rarely works.

In use, the SupraDrive is not as reliable as the GVP (it crashes and refuses to work with some software). My own suspicion is that the offset connector makes it trickier to connect and disconnect – there's a disable/enable switch at the back, so you don't have to do this, but we're forever slamming hard drives on and off A500s, so our's get a more serious testing than most. Similarly, speed (while good) does not compare well to the GVP. Not the very best hard drive, but generally an extremely good performer.

SupraDrive 500XP	
SPEED Quite nippy enough for most people	●●●●
DOCUMENTATION Well written and comprehensive	●●●●●
ACCESSIBILITY Easy to set up and use	●●●●●
FEATURES Mostly everything you'll ever need	●●●●●
VALUE Quite a good all-in-one buy	●●●●
AMIGA FORMAT Verdict	85%

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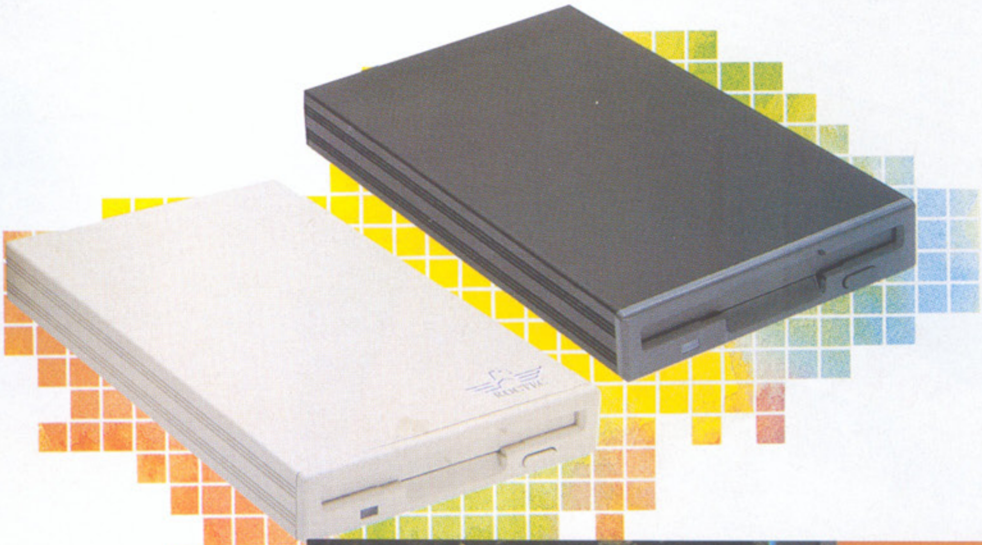
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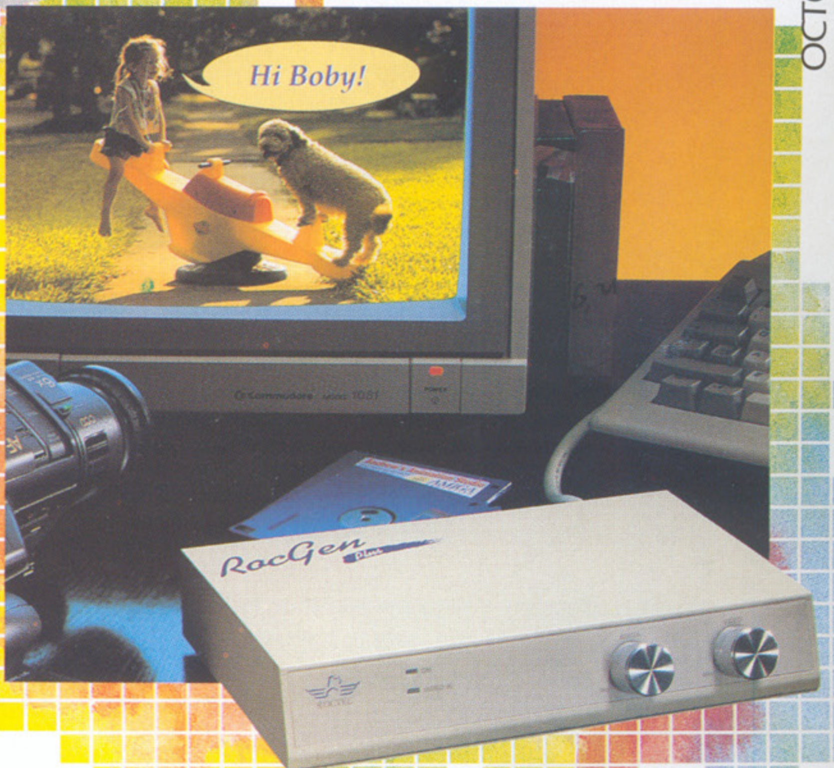
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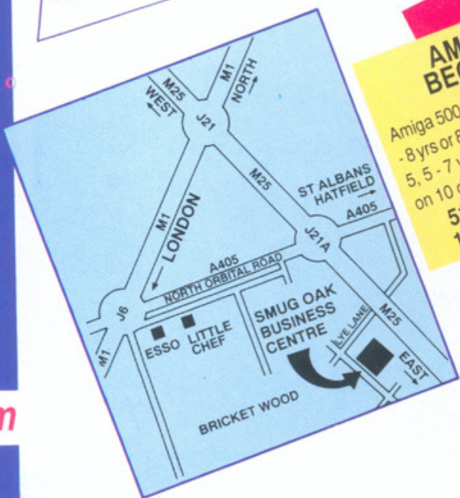
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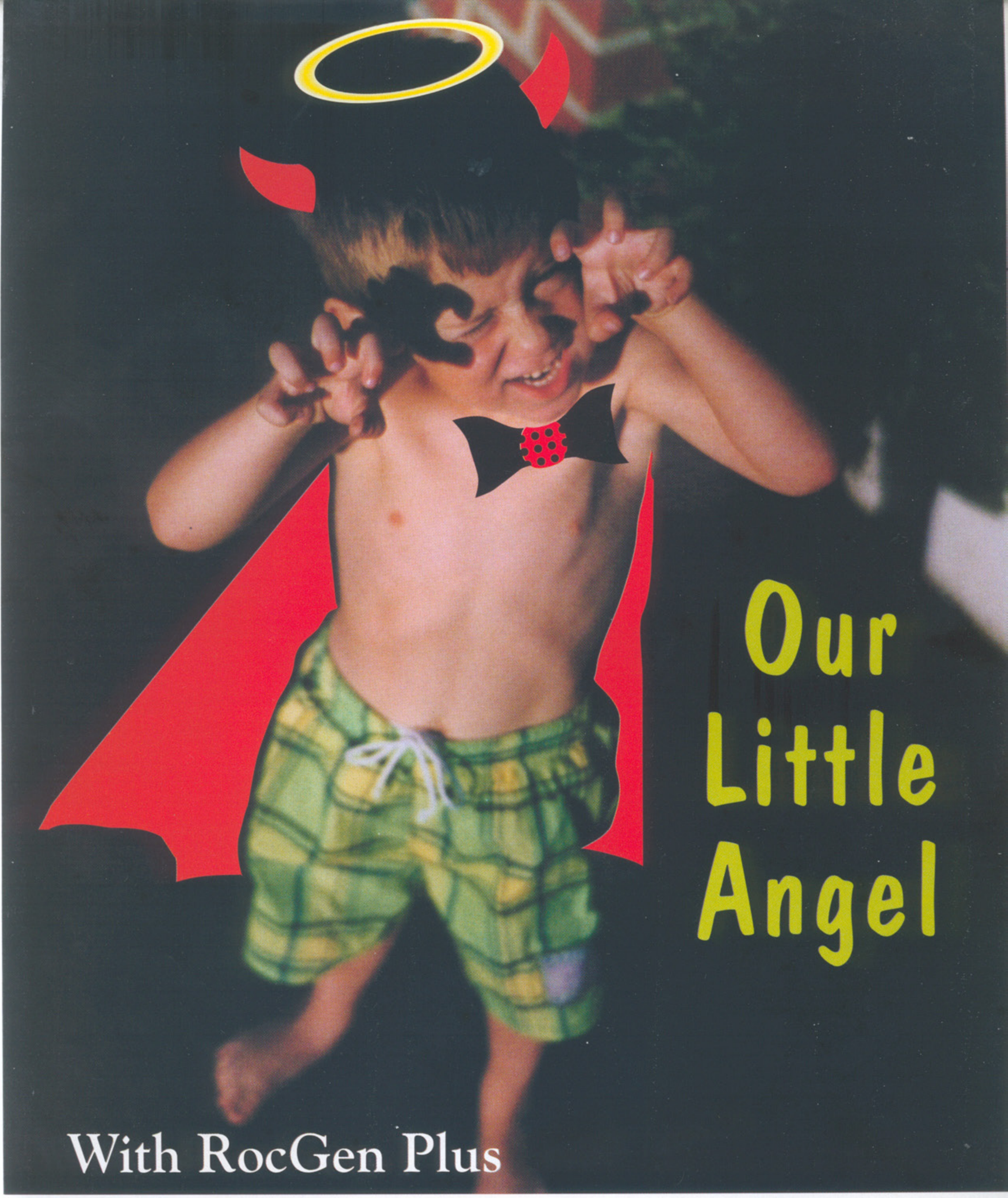
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Workbench

Does your computer seem more like an unfathomed nightmare than your flexible friend? Are you confused, worried or plain frustrated? Get some answers from **Pat McDonald** – you know it makes sense!

NOWHERE TO TURN

I bought an A500 in April '91 from Computer Images and Technology Ltd. CIT opened around December '90 and then, strangely, closed down about July '91. I still have all the receipts: I also filled in and sent off the registration card. My Amiga is therefore still under guarantee.

The trouble is that the machine has developed a fault recently: it now hangs up 90% of the time, with the screen turning dark green. When it does (rarely) work, the screen starts flickering wildly, then the machine crashes.

Is there a virus somewhere? Can a virus remain in memory when the machine is turned off? I have an A501 card with a battery backed-up clock – can a virus hide here? If it is a fault, who do I go to? Anyone know CIT's whereabouts?

S S BASSI, DERBY

There's no way a virus can hide in the battery backed-up clock – well, it could hide there, but it would never be triggered. The Amiga does not execute that part of memory as machine code instructions without quite a bit of extra programming – which wouldn't fit into the space. It's impossible, so your machine is broken.

If you get in touch with FMG (0733 361216), then they'll be happy to repair your machine, at no charge – they are Commodore's official repair agents in this country and responsible for all repairs under warranty. If you'd taken your machine back to the shop, they'd only have sent it to FMG anyway. Give them a call and check the exact details, but here's the gist (the same for all machines bought before July 1st):

1) They will collect and deliver the machine from and to a registered business address.
2) You can send your machine direct to them, and they'll refund the postage.
3) You could arrange collection with another Amiga dealer in your area – they probably won't be over the moon about this, but it's not going to cost anything.

WRONG AGAIN

In AF25 your reply to Paul Convery, with regard to Balance of Power 1990 from the AF23 coverdisk, is completely wrong. To get BOP running on a hard drive, simply make a new drawer (by duplicating the Empty drawer) and rename it BOP. Next, insert the floppy disk in the drive, double click on the Shell or CLI icon and type:

```
Copy all from DF0: to BOP
ed s/startup-sequence
```

You will now be presented with the startup-sequence, ready for editing. Just press the down cursor key until you're one line above the LoadWB command. Press the return key to make a blank space, and enter this line:-

```
Assign BOP: Sys:BOP
```

Press the Esc key, then the x key, and finally Return. You'll be back at the Shell window. This line, by the way, instructs the Amiga to look in the BOP drawer rather than look at the floppy disk. Purists will want to delete the unnecessary files in the new BOP drawer, but that's up to you.

In AF25 you implied that the request for the original floppy is because of a key-disk protection system, this isn't true. It occurs because the above assign has not been made – the Amiga expects a disk to be inserted called BOP, and isn't smart enough without the assign to work out where the BOP game is on the hard disk. BOP doesn't use on-disk protection but has a manual protection system – remember the password lists?

On a connected point, you imply that key disk protection is a good form of protection. It isn't. The whole point of making a back-up copy of a program is to enable you to lock away the original in a safe place. Key-disk protection defeats this object. Personally I prefer games with a manual based protection system – especially given the efficiency of disk duplicating backup systems.

STUART MILLINGTON, STOURBRIDGE

I stand corrected. The moral is, don't take anyone's word for anything unless you've tried it yourself.

UNKNOWN ERROR

I want to know why I get a disk error on Player Manager. I've used Diskdoctor, and it's fine until it gets to track 45. There are hard errors all over the disk from then on.

The game itself works, but there are bits missing out, like nobody gets arrested or killed, and my best players don't become internationals. Why? Also, I'd like the address for Infogrames, because I've lost the sheet for Sim City.

ROBIN SAXBY, CLEEVE

Never use Diskdoctor on a games disk – it can destroy them. Honestly, there's nothing wrong with the disk. Software houses often leave blank, unformatted tracks on disks. Infogrames address is 84 Rue du l'est Mars 1943, 69628 Villeurranne, Cedex – France.

THE ANSWER

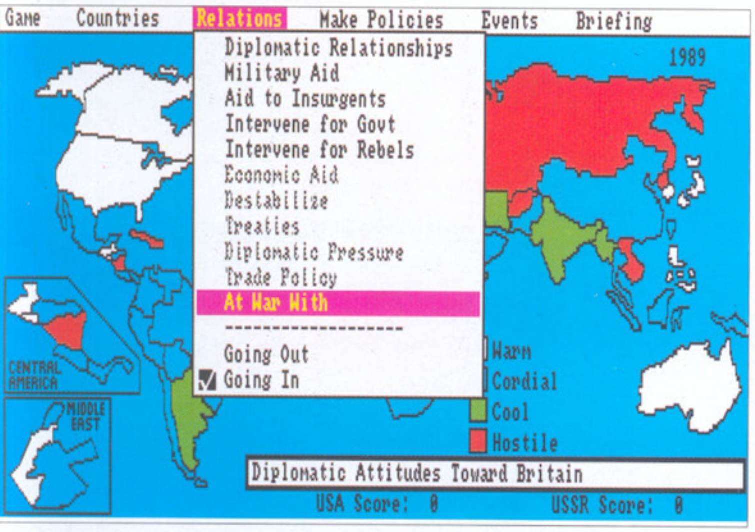
£50

I may have the solution to Stefan Allerhano's problem (AF27) of lack of sound on NoiseTracker. If he has just saved the song instead of the module, only the tune would have been saved, without any samples, therefore he would see the music bouncing up and down but hear nothing.

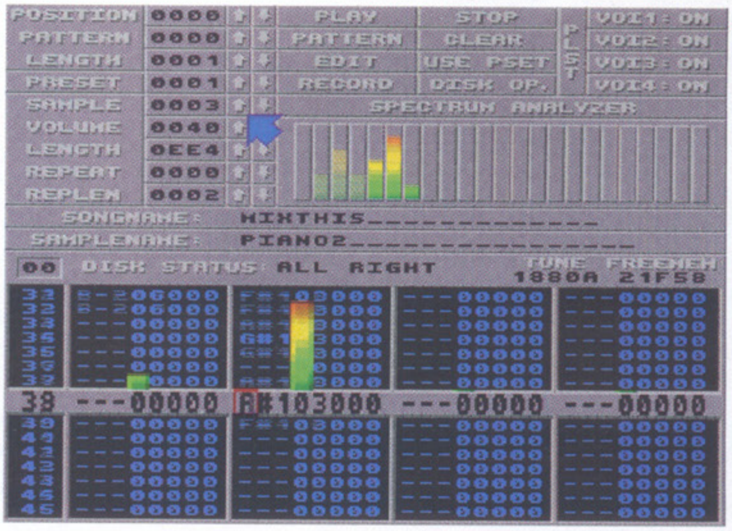
Assuming he hasn't deleted the song, he could get the tune playing again by loading the MixThis module and then saving each sample individually. Then load your song, and load each sample back one at a time – you would have to make a note of all the sample numbers, to make sure you didn't load the wrong sample in the wrong place. Then save the whole lot as a module, and he'll be there.

PETER DOBSON, CRICKHOWELL

Well done Peter, have a £50 mail order voucher.



Balance of Power will run on a hard drive, but does need an assign command added to the startup-sequence: a common proceadure for hard drive users



The NoiseTracker save song option just saves the song – no samples are saved with the song, so although the file is smaller it's silent compared to saving a module

AND ANOTHER

£50

I am writing in reply to the letter from Wouter Bruggeman, AF27, about problems with the SupraRAM 500RX. I also have the very same expansion with a 1Mb A500, a 50Mb hard disk, Datel Action Replay II and a second disk drive. I also had Guru problems when the SupraRAM was configured to 4Mb, yet everything worked apart from the Datel cartridge.

It was only when I set the SupraRAM to 2Mb (giving 3Mb total) that the cartridge worked. I think it's a problem with the cartridge not being able to run with more than 3Mb of memory. I also have a standard Commodore power supply, and I've now rigged up a switch on the SupraRAM to give 2 or 4Mb, depending on whether I want to use the cartridge or not. I hope this is of some help to Wouter.

GARY ROBERTS, SCUNTHORPE

The mystery explained. I think that deserves a £50 mail order voucher.

CD VAPOURWARE

I was reading through my dad's copy of PC Answers when I noticed an advertisement for a Philips CM50 CD ROM drive. Is it compatible with my expanded Amiga, and if so why isn't it advertised in your magazine, because it would make life a lot easier for many people?

MARTIN DINNAGE, PURITON

I must assume that it's not directly compatible with the Amiga – certainly Philips have never told us that it is, and the words "PC user" do not bode well for any kind of Amiga compatibility. However, I would expect a number of third-party CD-ROM drives to appear after the launch of the official A690, in a similar way to other hard drives appearing after the A590 was released. So I'm afraid that it's a false alarm for the moment, but do keep checking the adverts – they'll be there one day.

OBSCURITY

1) Is there an Amiga emulator for the Amstrad CPC computer?
2) I know you can get tape software onto the Amiga with a sampler, but surely most tapes are too long?
3) Which sound sampler is best to use for this sort of job?
4) Has the game Karnov ever been available for the Amiga? Can I get it now, and if so for how much?

S PLUMRIDGE, BRISTOL



The Amstrad CPC range are still in popular usage, but sadly no Amiga emulator is available - not even a PD one!

1) No. Never heard of one, honest.
2) Not really. Computer data files on tape are fairly uncomplicated – the rate at which they are sampled into memory is not high. Put it another way – every Amiga has at least 512K of memory, while the CPC had a maximum of 128K. So there's space enough in the Amiga.
3) Anything really – even MasterSound can do it.
4) Karnov was never available for the Amiga, and as it was published by Activision some years ago the chance of it being available now or in the near future is next to zero.

VECTOR CHECK

Please could you help me in writing a short AmigaBASIC routine which I intend to put at the beginning of my programs. I want to be able to look at the reset vectors (ColdCapture, CoolCapture, WarmCapture, KickTagPtr and KickMemPtr) to see if there is a virus in memory.

I know the following: they're all in a structure called Execbase, and that there is a pointer to it at location $00000004. ColdCapture is the 42nd byte, CoolCapture is the 46th byte, WarmCapture is the 50th byte, KickTagPtr is the 554th byte and KickMemPtr is the 550th byte.

I have tried many approaches, but cannot get the same values as displayed by Master Virus Killer 2.1 – I never get a value of 0. And please don't tell me to switch to Assembler or C.

G BENSON, PRESTON

Hmm. Other readers are of course welcome to write in on this, as I've never tried it myself. I think you're assuming that the actual values are stored at those addresses. Now it could be that they are just pointers again, to some other part of memory where the actual values are kept.

Alternatively (and much more likely) is that you're assuming that the data is just a single byte in each case. Address values on the Amiga are stored as four bytes of data – this give an eight digit hexadecimal number. Such a number is called a long word. However, the address bus of the 68000 chip only uses three bytes, so I'm unsure of the exact length of the data.

However, it could be that some of them are words (two byte numbers) rather than long words. Anyone out there who can shed more light on the subject, please write.

1ST DIALLER

I want to buy my first modem for a 1Mb A500. I don't know much about modems apart from the fact that you can communicate with other computers and download programs from bulletin boards.

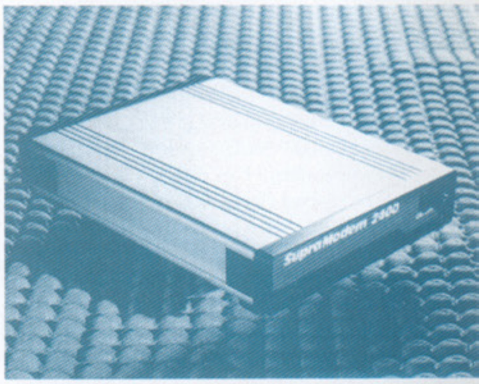
1) Could you please name some good modems for around £150 and where to obtain them from?
2) What software do you need to download programs from bulletin boards? How much does it cost?
3) Can you name the numbers of some good bulletin boards, and say how much it costs to phone them?
4) How do you communicate with other modems? Would I have a special phone number?
5) What do you need to connect an Amiga to a modem?
6) Where can I get Elite?

NICK ROBINSON, HAMPTON HILL

1) Surface UK (081 566 6677) stock the Supra range of modems, which are well up to most uses.
2) There are three Public Domain programs to look out for: Access!, NComm and JRComm. You can get these from most PD libraries for a couple of pounds.
3) Amiga II (0619 626377) is pretty good (although I haven't been there for a while). The trouble with bulletin boards is that the numbers change fairly often – I recommend you look for a copy of New Computer Express, who regularly list many bulletin boards. The cost is exactly the same as making a regular telephone call, which is why most people call local bulletin boards: they're cheaper.
4) Yes, you need the phone number before you can call anywhere. Of course, at the other end of the line, there has to be a modem and computer set up to take the call.
5) A standard modem lead, widely available from many shops.
6) Your best bet is to ask the mail order companies in this magazine, who have large listings of old software.

CHEAP EXPANSION

I have a B2000 with an XT Bridgeboard and a 20MB hard disk partitioned 50/50. I really do need a bigger hard disk, but am unsure of the best, cost effective route. As far as I understand it the hard disk is a PC one which is accessed from the Amiga side.



Supra modems are small, well made and are available with the MNP5 error correction system for trouble free comms

Is it possible to just take out the old hard disk, plug in a bigger one, then format and partition it? It seems PC hard disks are much cheaper. Or will I have to go the other route, and purchase an extra Amiga type hard disk complete with controller card and fit it in tandem with the current one? Will there be a conflict between the two?

LES SIMON, SOUTHAMPTON

I expect you can just unplug the old one and plug in a new one, provided that they both use the same PC type connector. For further information on B2000 expansion, I recommend you talk to Calco (081 546 7256) who should be able to sort you out.

BUT WHERE?

I plan to buy a Canon BJ10e bubblejet printer in order to use the Amiga's art and word processing packages to their full potential. I like the Canon for its speed and laser like quality. However, where do I get a printer driver? Who sells the cheapest BJ10e?

DAVID WOOD, OLDHAM

According to Asam (who owns a BJ10e) the EpsonLQ driver is the most suitable on the Extras disk, assuming that the printer is set to mode two. Mind you, he uses a custom driver which he got from Soft Logik in the

USA for use with PageStream, as he's a registered user of that program. I understand that a full BJ10e driver is on one of the JAM disks – phone Jeff Walker (0895 274449).

How much? Well, expect to pay up to £289 for a BJ10e. Some places do offer discounts, but as these change from month to month, your best bet is to closely read through this issue.

SIMPLE MISTAKE

Here and there I have seen anti-virus devices that plug into the back of your Amiga and somehow prevent viruses spreading from disk to disk. Do they really work? How?

I'm intending to buy a hard drive soon. Not wanting to spend more than £320, it seemed that the low capacity and ugly Commodore A590 20MB drive seemed the way to go. While looking through my back copies of AF, I stumbled across an advert for the Quantum Pro Drive, 50Mb for the same price as the A590!

Is this too good to be true, could the £275 price tag be a misprint? Or would I be buying a sub-standard drive at a cheap price? The ad was from Calco software.

Yes, they do work. All they do is use a bit of electronic circuitry to prevent all floppy disk from being written to in any way, whether the tab is moved across or not. Although they're quite a clever idea, they are a bit of a pain when you want to save some information to disk – as generally, you have to flick a switch, press a button or do some similar trivial action.

No, Quantum Pro-Drives are one of the best types of hard disks that you can buy. Unfortunately, all you will get is a box like piece of bare electronics with a huge edge connector – it's just a hard disk, with no controller to interface it to your Amiga. You were right, it is too good to be true. Sorry.



The CBM A590 may have it's faults, but it does work - a Quantum hard disk needs a controller to allow connection

LOOK TO THE FUTURE

I have at present a very vanilla A500 – absolutely no add-ons whatsoever. Following the usual advice regarding expansion I started looking at extra memory first. Then I realized that all of this extra hardware – except monitor and printer – would be useless when I upgrade to an A2000 or A3000. Why spend money which I won't get back when I need to sell it?

1) I already have a Star LC24-200, which I know to be compatible with the 2000/3000. What other peripherals are?
2) I notice Diamond from London offer a part exchange – a 1Mb A500 for an A2000 for £350. Can this be right, as 2000s usually sell for £600-£700?
3) A3000s seem to be pretty mysterious, with no magazine having done a full review of it, or its software. Why not? If I could afford one (a big question) do you think it could be used as a home computer? What kind of people is it aimed at?
4) I would use an Amiga for the following: word processing, programming (C and assembler), running a PD library, Comms (maybe), ray tracing and playing games. Which computer would you suggest? I thought a 2000 or 3000. What sized hard disk should I get? How much memory – would 4Mb be enough?
5) Is a multisync monitor a worthwhile purchase or a luxury?
6) Is a bulletin board system difficult to set up and run?
7) Are any companies creating their software to run on A3000s? For instance Deluxe Paint IV, Protext, games and so on.

LESLIE FOWLER, TYNEMOUTH

1) In general, all peripherals that plug into the expansion bus are incompatible. In English, that means peripherals that plug into the side of an A500, or internally on a 2000/3000. So sound samplers and video digitizers that use the parallel port are fine – so are modems and serial printers. Joysticks and mice are compatible across the range. Things that don't work are (typically) memory expansions, accelerator cards (exception – the CSA Mega Midget Racer goes in an A2000) and hard drives (except the IVS Trumpcard).
2) No, many firms offer generous trade-in deals for an A500, mainly because they're so popular. Generally, an A1500 is offered rather than an A2000, but that's a good thing. The A1500 is an A2000 with two floppy disk drives rather than one.
3) The reason why we haven't reviewed the A3000 is because it took about a year for Commodore to send us one. Given that it's now an established machine, there's not really a lot of point reviewing it. However, if enough people write to Damien and ask, I'm sure he'll let me loose on it.

The A3000 is most definitely not a home computer. It's an Amiga with everything included – the latest Kickstart, Workbench 2, built-in flicker fixer, 68030 fast processor (16 or 25MHz) with a 68882 floating point unit, latest ECS Denise and Agnus for up to 2Mb of chip RAM plus two new video modes (Productivity – interlace resolution without interlace – and SuperHiRes) and a hard drive fitted as standard. Even the mouse is different.

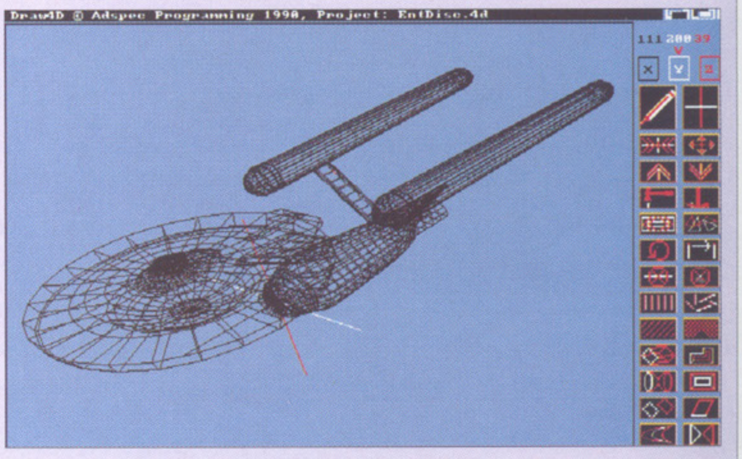
Typically, people get A3000s because they need a very good Amiga and they don't want to buy all the parts separately as a kit. Of course, given the relative expense, most A3000s are bought by businesses for use by their employees.

They are really excellent machines for serious usage – practically all word processors, paint programs, image processors and so on work flawlessly. However, many games are incompatible with the A3000. This isn't the fault of the machine, programmers didn't realize that Commodore would release such a beast.
4) You want to do all that? That's the next ten years of your life booked up! The best machine at present for that is the A1500/A2000. The reasons are twofold: it's fairly easy to get expansions for the A2000, where as A3000 memory chips are about all that's available. Also, you get much less program incompatibility with the A2000 – Kickstart 2, Workbench 2, and the new ECS chips (Agnus and Denise) will be made available for the machine around Christmas, should you need them.

I use a 40Mb hard disk for writing reviews and testing serious software, and I have yet to fill it. These days, 50Mb are more common than 40Mb, so you should consider one of them. If you are really ambitious, you might consider a 100Mb jobby. Larger sizes are available for the incredibly productive.

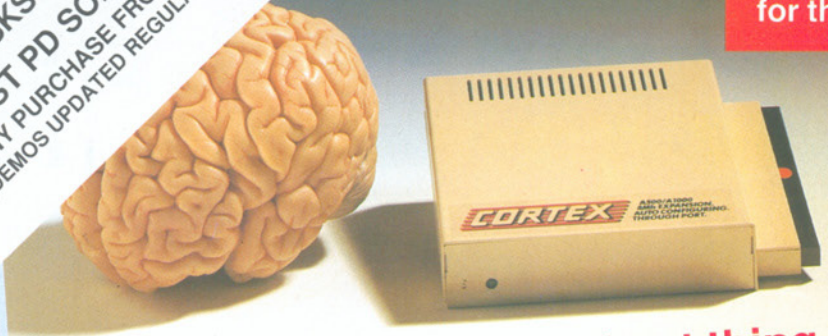
Memory wise, only a couple of programs need 3Mb (VistaPro being one example). 4Mb should therefore be ample. If you have more then you can multitask more programs: that is, have have them running at the same time.
5) It depends how much you use interlace graphics. Many ray-tracing programs use interlace exclusively, and it really helps to be able to use interlace with DTP software. It depends how clear you need your graphics really. Don't forget the Microway Flicker Fixer if you buy an A2000/A1500, otherwise you'll have an expensive monitor which displays the same old flickery interlace.
6) Being a sysop (system operator – person who runs a bulletin board) is a very time consuming hobby. Typically, most BBS programs are Public Domain, and yes they can be quite tricky to set up. The easiest approach is to log on to a present Amiga BBS, and ask the sysop how to go about the task.
7) Happily, most serious software now released for the Amiga is A3000 friendly – Deluxe Paint IV is excellent, as is Protext. Wordworth really benefits from the speed, as do many other programs. So serious software is generally no problem – many companies have done small updates to get their programs onto the A3000.

Games are not written with the A3000 in mind at all. I'm not saying that none of them work, but many of them do not. This situation is unlikely to change until Kickstart 2, Workbench 2 and the ECS chips are widely available for the A500 and A2000/A1500.



Many ray-tracing programs (such as Draw4d pictured here) work in interlace exclusively, making long usage very hard on the eyes – unless you have a flicker fixer.

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Answerfile

Are you in need of some quick answers to common queries? **Pat McDonald** comes up with the goods in this month's question-and-answer session.

Q What is the RAD device?

A RAD is a specialist form of the RAM disk. The RAM disk icon just sits on Workbench, serving as a temporary storage area. When you reset the machine (press CTRL and the two keys either side of the spacebar) all the contents are lost.

RAD is different, because it can survive a reset (although not a power cut). If you have a fair amount of memory – say 2MB or more – then it can be useful to make a RAD boot disk. What this does is setup RAD, copy Workbench into it and then resets. Every time you reset, Workbench boots up without a floppy – and it's much faster than using a floppy.

Full instructions on how to do this are in the manuals that came with your Amiga, but do bear in mind that there are problems with RAD – specifically, it can show read/write errors in a similar manner to a floppy disk. Just why it does this is unknown.

Q How do I put something into the Public Domain?

A Easy – just send a copy to a PD library. Even better, send copies to a few different libraries, and one of them will almost certainly put it in their catalogue.

Q Which half MB expansion do I buy?

A It doesn't really matter that much. They all do much the same job, giving an extra 0.5MB of RAM to a standard A500. My own personal favourite is the Ashcom one at about £35 – Ashcom (0530 411485).

Q What is an IFF file? And an ANIM file, while you're at it.

A IFF stands for Interchange File Format, a buzzword invented – I think – by Electronic Arts some years ago. All it offers is a standard way of sharing pictures, images and sound samples (although the latter use has not proved that popular).

So, an IFF file is best thought of as a picture saved in a particular way. Most people were so impressed with IFF that it became the standard way of sharing pictures and information almost instantly. IFF can handle any screen format up to 24 bit, so it's a real standard – I can't see anything replacing it.

ANIM files are animation files – effectively lots of IFFs joined together, with built in compression to keep them small. Unlike IFF, the ANIM format was tinkered with quite a lot to start with. The present standard is ANIM-5, which most animation software can use quite happily. ANIM format is considerably more complex than normal IFFs, because they are heavily compressed.

Q My machine won't save anything onto floppy disk anymore – it says that the disk is write protected when it isn't. What do I do?

A Don't panic. All that's happened is the sensor which detects the write protect shutter isn't working properly. If your machine is in warranty, take it back to where you bought it. I will say, though, that this is fairly common with many floppy disk drives (not just on the Amiga) so many computer shops can repair it in a few minutes for a few pounds.

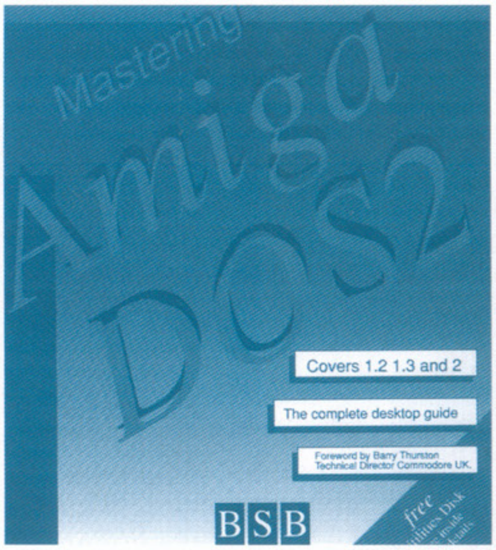
Q I have just bought Perfect Sound. I just wondered whether I could use the Audiomaster 3 sampling program, rather than the supplied software. If so, how much does it cost and where can I get it from?

A Yes, you can mix and match sound sampling hardware and software. Many firms supply Audiomaster 3 on it's own – for instance, Connect International supply it for £47.99. They're not the only ones, and some might do it cheaper, but you can reach Connect on 0296 682277.

Q Name a good book to teach me how to use Shell properly.

A I name this book... Mastering AmigaDOS 2 volume one. It's a full tutorial (that is, thick) on getting to grips with Shell and AmigaDOS in general. From the humblest beginnings to writing your own script files, it's very clear and highly recommended.

It costs about £17.95 and is available from Bruce Smith Books (021 706 6000). Volume two, by the way, is a complete reference source on all versions of AmigaDOS (1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.0) – I recommend that to anyone who needs an up-to-date listing of all standard AmigaDOS commands and their usage.



Look out for this book – it's a full hands on tutorial to digging deep into AmigaDOS, and is the best written guide of its type

Q *Wings* won't go onto my hard drive. The install icon, when clicked on, just returns an error code.

A I've been through this myself. Reboot your Amiga, holding down the CTRL and D keys. You'll get a message like "Break – CLI". Type

```
LoadWB
Endcli
```

Now put the *Wings* floppy disk in the drive, double click on the icon and all should be well. Wings is one game that benefits greatly when running on a hard drive – no annoying pauses or disk swaps.

Q I can't understand a bloody thing in the *MusicX 1.1* manual. Help.

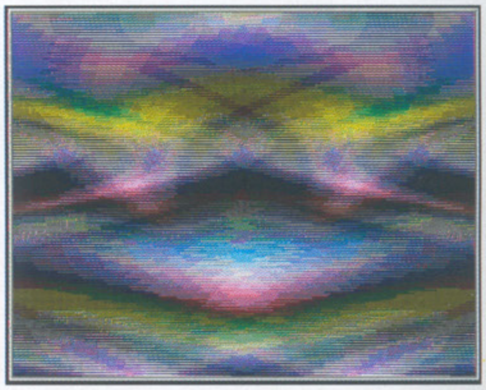
A You're not the only one! There was a monthly newsletter organized by Monumental Music called Club Sequence. This contains a disk with lots of protocols, lots of hints and tips, and of course a letters section. It costs about £25 to join for a year, and they also offer an hour long tutorial tape for £9.99.

Sounds good eh? Unfortunately, the number I had for them has since been disconnected. Does anyone know where they are now? Their old number was 0634 280680.

Q What's a copper list?

A The copper chip (short for coprocessor) is a handy bit of programmable graphics hardware, built into every Amiga at the factory. All it really consists of is a fairly precise clock, but that wasn't your question.

A copper list is a set of instructions for the copper chip – similar to any other programs, except that it doesn't use the main processor (68000) at all. All it does is measure the electron beam scanning down your TV once every 50th or 60th of a second, depending on whether you have a European PAL Amiga or an American NTSC model.



Many PD demos, such as Plasmutex '91 featured above, are done by generating a copper list while it's being displayed

Anyway, a copper list can tell where the electron beam is at any one time. If for instance the computer changes the background colour slightly, the result will

be a graduated background colour – the First Samurai demo uses this effect.

There's a lot more to it – if you change the copper list while the scan line is working its way down the screen, then complex "Plasma" effects are possible. Not terribly useful, mind you, but there are a lot of PD demos which use this technique to good effect.

Q I'm well and truly fed up with the mouse thatcame with the Amiga. After six months the left mouse button rarely works. What should I get to replace it?

A Here in the office we prefer to use Naksha mice, as they are comfortable, reliable and easy to maintain. Don't forget to take the ball out for cleaning occasionally – and the rollers on the inside sometimes benefit from a scrape, as dirt and grease can build up over the months. Expect to pay around £25-£35 for one from a retailer, or look at our special offer pages on page 220 of this issue.



The Naksha mouse is a real hit in our office. It's comfortable, has a long lead, matches the colour and works very well

Q I can understand that a standard Amiga disk can store up to 880K of data. What I don't understand are disk optimizers and programs which squeeze files and uncrunch them again. I want to get the best out of a disk, but I don't know how to go about it.

A A disk optimizer (such as BAD, reviewed last month) is a program which reads all the files off a disk, and puts them back on again in the best order it can. You may have noticed how some disks seem much slower than others at, say, displaying icons or starting a program running.

As a disk fills up, files go onto it in logical, sequencial order (for the most part). When a file is deleted though, a hole is left which is usable. Next time a file is saved, it will use the hole – but if it's too big, it will be split into two or more pieces. In extreme cases, it could be scattered all over a disk. This is called disk fragmentation.

So a disk optimizer just changes the arrangement of files on a disk, to make them load faster. Of couse, if something gets deleted from the disk, then it should be optimized (assuming you must have the fastest floppies around).

Compression programs are a little bit different, and come in two varieties. Real time compressors/decompressors like Powerpacker (PD) or PowerPacker Pro (Licenseware) will let you squeeze down programs with varying amounts of efficiency. When the program loads, it pauses to uncrunch itself into memory. A process not unlike a coiled spring being released.

Much more efficient are the program archivers like LhArca and Zoo (both PD). Files which have been through these programs will not work without decompressing them with the same program. Typically, you'll find them used by comms freaks to shorten the time it takes to transmit files up and down telephone lines.

Q Which is better, a hard drive or memory expansion? I can't afford both.

A Well, if a hard drive is totally out of the question a memory expansion like the Cortex or SupraRAM 500RX will help out. A 2MB memory board, when used with a RAD boot disk (see elsewhere on this page) will allow you to reboot and use Workbench much more quickly than from floppy.

Do bear in mind that some hard drives have memory expansion boards built in. These represent the best of both worlds – check out the hard drive feature on P199.

Q I enjoy reading your magazine, but as I am not a computer buff all this talk of bits, bytes, K and MB has me very confused. I think they're all connected to computer memory somehow, but please explain in English.

A Iniside every electronic computer, everything in memory is stored as numbers. Little pulses of on and off, to represent the numbers 1 or 0. The way these are arranged is quite important - eight such 1s or 0s are called a "byte". A bit is a single 1 or 0 digit - the name comes from BInary digiT.

The term byte is interchangable with character. So a text file on a disk that was say, 10000 bytes long could be referred to as being 10000 characters long. I'm using the word character here to mean a letter or punctuation mark - the things written on the keyboard!

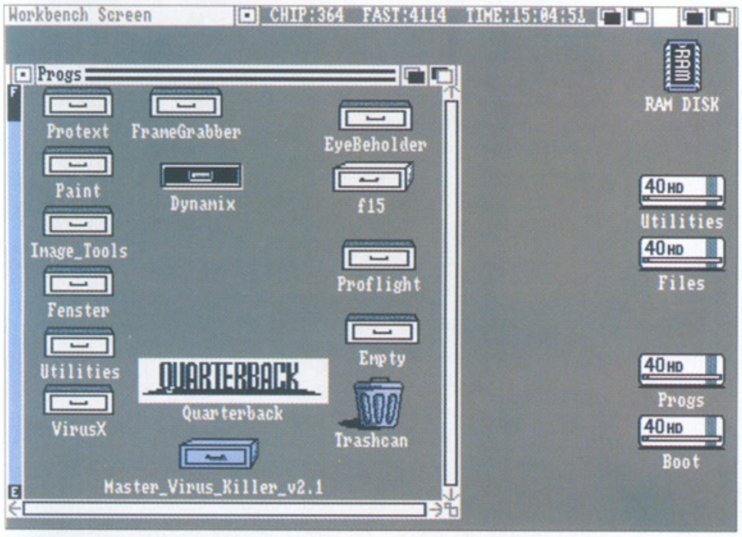
Anyway, two bytes make 16 bits - such a number is called a "word". Two words make a "long word", a 32 bit number. Upon these basic building blocks come the whole arrangement of computers.

A "Kilobyte" (K) is equivalet to 1024 bytes - in the above example, you could say the text file was about 10K long. On the Amiga though, the standard abbreviation for memory is "MB" - megabyte. One megabyte is a huge area of memory, 1024 multiplied by 1024.

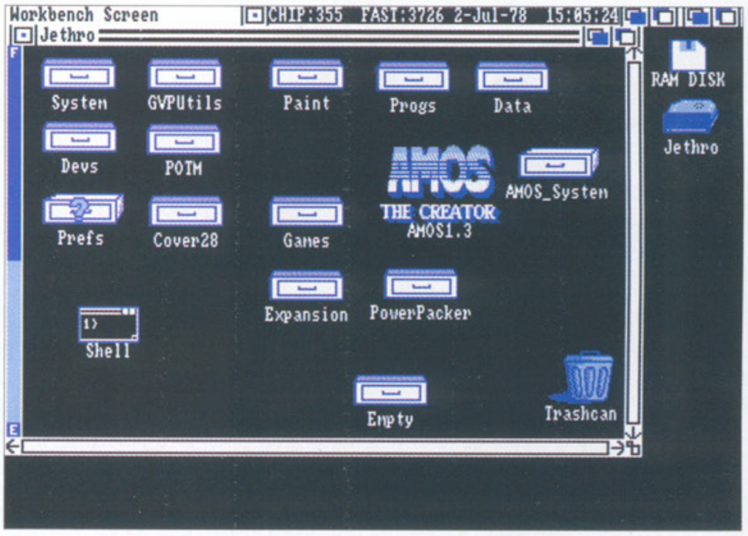
Q I know what a hard drive looks like, but what real difference does it make to using my Amiga? Please show me.

A There are two different approaches to hard drive setups. One is to just use a hard disk as one disk, keeping all of your eggs in the same basket. The good side is that the hard drive takes up less memory from the computer. The bad news is that, if the hard drive develops a fault, then all the data is at risk.

Alternatively, you can split a hard drive up into several different areas, or partitions. That way, you can have all of Workbench in one area, all the programs you use in another, and all the data files (pictures, sounds, animations, text files) on another. This is more secure, because if a fault develops it will only affect one partition. Each extra partition needs about 64K or more of memory, so a really big (300MB) hard disk split into eight partitions would use 0.5 MB of memory – quite a slice.



A different approach is to split a hard disk into several partitions. This is Trenton's drive, and he rarely uses more than 2MB at once, so extra partitions make sense – if one partition goes down, the others are usually ok, so it's easier to repair such a system from floppy backups



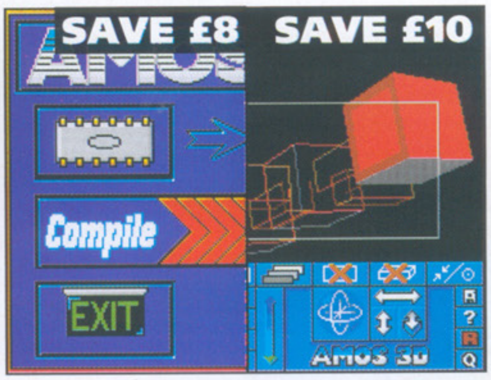
Here's my personal hard drive setup. ZeroVirus III is up and running, keeping an eye on any floppies that I use. The hard drive (Jethro) only has one partition, mainly because I need to keep memory for programs. Apart from that it's a standard Workbench hard disk



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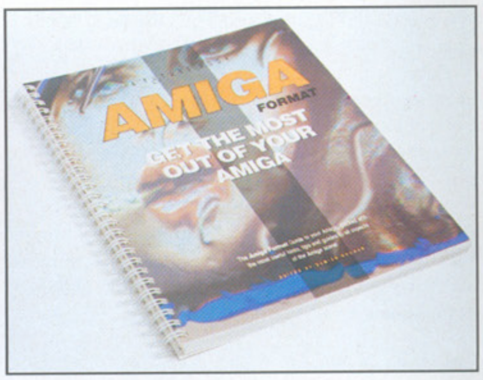
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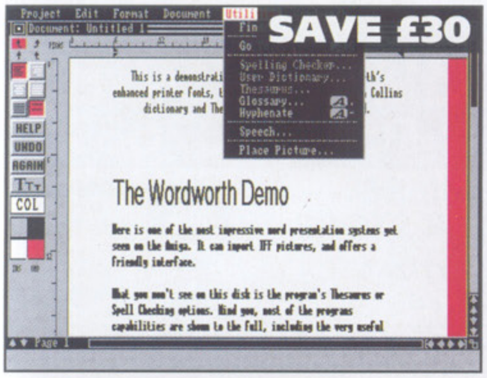
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FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME the extremely exclusive limited edition *Amiga Format* T-shirt becomes generally available to *Amiga Format* readers. Previously, these could only be obtained as competition prizes, but now we've decided to give in to popular demand and put them on sale. Features the 'Lichtenstein' cover of Issue 20 in a large four-colour back print, new *AF* logo on front.

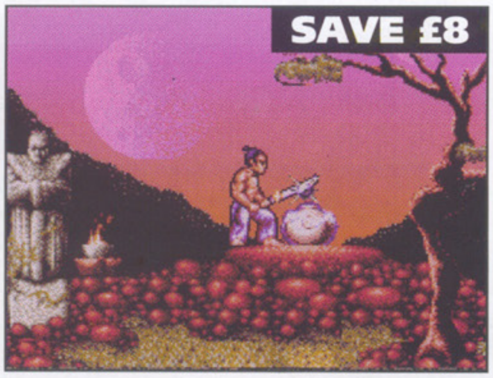
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First Samurai	**£17.99**	**AM227**



Jimmy White's Snooker

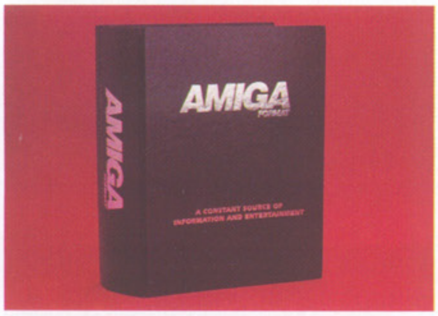
The Format Gold snooker game, with an amazingly playable 3D system conceived by master programmer Archer McClean. One of the most enjoyable games of the year to date.

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Taking the First Steps

In the sequel to our vital resource for beginners, **Mark Smiddy** returns with an everyman's guide to AmigaDOS

THE AMIGA IS a powerful yet much misunderstood machine. At it's heart is AmigaDOS, the disk operating system which manages disks, files, keyboard, mouse and screen. Understanding AmigaDOS provides the reins to harness the Amiga's power, making the computer do exactly what you want.

It's a rich and complex subject to get to grips with, something that many beginners (like you perhaps) will find a little awe inspiring at first. As you embark of this trek into the unknown, never forget, even the wise man was a toddler once - taking those first tentative steps on the journey of experiment towards the temple of wisdom.

Enough waxing of the lyrical - any more and I'll run out of polish. This series has been designed to teach the rudiments of AmigaDOS by experiment; answering questions frequently asked by beginners. Although the basic outline is already planned, your feedback will mould the future instalments - so if there is any aspect you want to know more about, write to me at the address below.

One of the most commonly asked questions is, "How do I create a boot disk?". Although this is one of the most potentially difficult and disastrous areas, this series will kick off right there by creating a boot disk tailored for the NotePad. Some knowledge of Workbench will be necessary to complete the examples and few of the AmigaDOS terms will be explained at this early stage. Whatever else you do, complete each step before proceeding to the next.

Note: In all the examples, where you are required to enter something directly into the Shell, the Shell's initial prompt (1.SYS>) will be shown too in a simplified form. For instance, if you see:

```
1>DISKDOCTOR DF0:
```

you would enter:

```
DISKDOCTOR DF0:
```

Shell's output and responses are shown in bold face, viz:

```
1>DISKDOCTOR DF0:
Disk Doctor 1.3.4
Insert disk to be corrected and press
Return
```

Finally, the symbol:

[etc.]

is used to indicate where AmigaDOS will produce a long list of information. When you have that style wisdom firmly embedded in the ol' grey matter, you are ready to start mucking with AmigaDOS.

Lesson 1: Creating a Simple Boot Disk

You will need: A copy of Workbench 1.3; a blank disk. The following instructions assume you have booted with a copy of Workbench and have opened the Shell window.

1 : Duplicate the Workbench 1.3 disk.

There are two ways to create a boot disk. Either create one from scratch or start with an existing one and change it to suit you; and this is the approach I'll adopt here.

1.1 Click in the Shell's window to make it active.

1.2 Users with two or more drives proceed to step 1.5

1.3 Enter the following at the prompt:



The from disk mentioned here is the Workbench disk already in the internal drive. After a short while AmigaDOS will prompt:

```
Place DESTINATION ( TO ) disk in
drive DF1:
Press RETURN to continue
```

1.4 At this point you should replace your Workbench disk with the blank disk you dug out earlier and then press the Return (ø) or Enter key. It is not necessary to format (initialise) the disk first, AmigaDOS will do that for you. When the operation has been completed (this may take several disk swaps depending on how much RAM you have) carry on at step 2.

WORKBENCH VS. AMIGADOS

There is a very close relationship between AmigaDOS and Workbench - in fact, the Workbench is, more or less, just a graphical interface to AmigaDOS! However, many operations normally performed from the Workbench can be enhanced or simplified from AmigaDOS. In fact, some operations are simpler from the Workbench- although many purists will probably write to their MP at the very idea!

Consult Tables 1 and 2. These are a greatly simplified comparison (looking from Workbench's side of the fence) of how the two relate. At first glance this might be enough to make you hang up your keyboard and stay with a mouse; or even give up computers and retire to a Tibetan monastery. To use a cliche, don't panic. It really is quite straightforward once you get the hang of entering simple commands.

1.5 Users with dual or multiple drives have a slightly different system. On the A1500, B2000 and A3000 machines the first external drive is called DF2, not DF1 as described here. The example remains the same, just substitute DF1 with DF2.

```
1>DISKCOPY FROM DF0: TO DF1:
Place source disk ( from disk ) in
drive df0:
Place DESTINATION ( TO ) disk in
drive DF1:
Press RETURN to continue
```

1.6 Leave the Workbench disk in the internal drive and place the blank disk in the external drive. It is not necessary to format (initialise) the disk first, AmigaDOS will do that for you.

2 Rename the Disk

Every time you duplicate a disk using the Workbench, the phrase "Copy of" gets appended to its name. Under AmigaDOS however, every copied disk retains its original name. AmigaDOS can tell the difference by using the disks internal "last modified" time and date stamp. Humans of course, fallible as we are, cannot. Therefore although it is quite possible to work on two disks of the same name, it is better to rename one of them; and that is the purpose of this step.

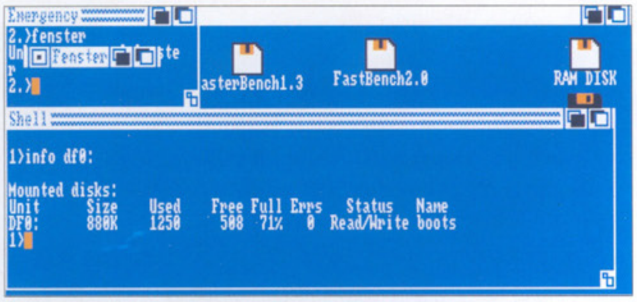
2.1 Single drive users especially should ensure a write-protected, working copy of Workbench is in the internal drive. You can check this by entering:

```
1>LIST SYS:
Directory "SYS:" on Tuesday 27-Aug-91
Expansion.info     894 —rwed
.info                       70 —rwed

[etc.]
```

The command itself and the output are not really important. However, this command will make certain you are working with the right disk - the word SYS: tells AmigaDOS to check the current Workbench or boot disk. If any other disk is present in a single drive setup, AmigaDOS will display a request for the correct disk.

2.2 At this point you can even ask AmigaDOS to check if the disk in the internal drive is write protected, like this:



Once again, much of the information presented here is of no relevance yet. Two things can be seen from this example: under the status line the disk shows Read Only - write protected in other words. Also, its name is shown - Work in this case, a copy of Workbench. Simple names come in handy as you will see later. Users with multiple drives should proceed at Step 2.4.

2.3 Now those (optional) steps are over it's time to rename the disk. Since you only have a single drive, I'll use a little trick.



When the prompt "DRIVE/A,NAME/A" appears, replace the new disk - the copy of Workbench - in the internal drive before pressing Return. That's one way, here's another:

```
1>RELABEL ?
DRIVE/A,NAME/A: DF0: BOOT
```

In this case you enter the drive number and the disks name at the prompt; again changing the disk just before pressing Return for the second time. Continue at Step 3.

2.4 Renaming any disk with two or more drives is a simple matter of specifying the drive containing the disk and its new name. Making sure the Workbench disk is in the internal drive and the copy of it is in the external one enter this:

```
1>RELABEL DRIVE DF1: NAME BOOT
```

Assuming everything goes to plan, AmigaDOS will just return you to the prompt. You can check the disk's name has changed using the INFO command described above. Note, it will not appear on the Workbench screen until you:

a) Remove and re-insert the disk or,
b) Use the DISKCHANGE command to let Workbench know immediately. This command is rarely used, so I'll not detail it here.

3 Remove unwanted directories

At this stage, you have a complete and fully working Workbench disk called "boot". This may seem a trifle pointless but it avoids a lot of fiddling around with the things you normally take for granted. For instance, you set things like screen colours, printer settings and serial options through the preferences screen. But none of the options will work unless certain directories are present.

Virtually everything the Amiga does is controlled, at least in part, by software stored externally on the Workbench disk. Some of those items are required, others are not. Generally speaking drawers visible from the Workbench (Utilities, Empty etc.) are not usually required by the system so they can be discarded. Everything I am about to describe in this section can be easily performed from Workbench with judicious use of the Discard and Trashcan facilities; however, you should use AmigaDOS to get an idea of the contrast.

3.1 No matter how many drives you have, boot the machine with the disk just created - this serves to make the example easier to follow.

3.2 Next, you need to know which files and directories can be safely removed and which cannot. In most systems, the following drawers - known in AmigaDOS as directories - can be thrown away: Trashcan; Prefs; Empty; Expansion; Utilities. In addition to those certain files in the System drawer can be removed.

Sharp-eyed readers may have spotted NotePad lives in the Utilities drawer which is about to get the big heave-ho. Since this feature is more general, the NotePad will be removed and re-installed. Much the same technique could be applied to another application, say, AmigaBASIC - you might like to try that for yourself.

Returning to the problem in hand, one simple command can be used to get rid of entire directories in one go - DELETE. Open the Shell and enter these lines (Shell's output is not shown for clarity):

```
1>DELETE Trashcan ALL
1>DELETE Prefs ALL
1>DELETE Empty ALL
1>DELETE Expansion ALL
1>DELETE Utilities ALL
```

Notice how the Trashcan can easily be removed? Try doing that from the Workbench and see how far you get…

Mark Smiddy is co-author of the *Mastering AmigaDOS* guides published by Bruce Smith Books

VERSIONS, SMERSIONS

At the time of writing AmigaDOS 2 is not in common use and version1.2 is all-but dead. This series will only cover the 1.3 and 1.3.2 releases, although much of it will also apply to AmigaDOS 2. If you are still battling with a 1.2 (or earlier) release, now is a good time to upgrade. Most good dealers will be able to supply the pack off-the-shelf in the form of three disks plus manual. Alternatively, many PD libraries carry the MicroSmiths' AmigaDOS replacement, ARP. Although this has its problems it does offer a reasonably cost-effective upgrade.

3.3 Now most of the disk has been cleared out, it is time to remove some of the unwanted items from the System drawer. Enter this:

```
1>DIR System
.info                        CLI
CLI.info
DiskCopy.info
DiskCopy
FastMemFirst
FastMemFirst.info Fixfonts

[etc.]
```

There are two entries for every command (Workbench Tool). The name on its own is the command - a program; the name with .info (pronounced dot-info) is the icon file. Icon files are used by the Workbench to store a variety of information, not least the icon's design! There is also an extra dot-info entry - this is created by Workbench when a drawer is opened; and as you might have guessed by now, those dot-info files are just taking up space, really.

3.4 The following commands are of no use at this stage: InitPrinter; MergeMem; FixFonts. To get rid of the unwanted files, a slightly different version of the DELETE command is used. However, rather than deleting everything willy-nilly, we just want to select certain names - but to save typing each one whole we can use an AmigaDOS facility called a wildcard pattern. For instance, the following removes FixFonts and FixFonts.Info:

```
1>DELETE System/Fix#?
System/FixFonts  Deleted
System/FixFonts.Info  Deleted
```

In this sense, we tell DELETE to look in the SYSTEM directory with "SYSTEM/" for all the files whose names start with "FIX". By the same method, we can delete the other unwanted files too:

```
1>DELETE System/Mer#?
System/MergeMem  Deleted
System/MergeMem.Info  Deleted
1>DELETE System/NoF#?
System/NoFastMem  Deleted
System/NoFastMem.Info  Deleted
```

4 Copying an Application

Surprising as it may seem, even at this stage you still have an almost fully-functioning Workbench disk. Although you cannot change the preferences on that disk, the old ones remain; the Trashcan and some System commands have gone, but the Shell is still active and provides some degree of control. In fact, you may find it useful to keep several copies of this disk for use as ready-to-run boot disks - because now it's time to put an application on. For this example, I'll use NotePad - the basic text processor that comes with Workbench – but you can boot almost anything from this disk using the methods described.

4.1 In Step 2.3, I used a special trick to make AmigaDOS wait while you got the correct disk ready. For this example I'll used another - based on the RESIDENT command. Enter this:

```
1>RESIDENT C:COPY
```

This makes the COPY command resident in RAM therefore saving a lot of disk swapping.

4.2 Now place a copy of the original Workbench disk in the internal drive and enter:

```
1>COPY DF0:Utilities/Note#? to RAM:
DF0:Utilities/NotePad..copied
DF0:Utilities/NotePad.info..copied
```

Used in this way, COPY is directed to find any files in the Utilities directory of the disk in DF0: and make a copy of them in the RAM Disk. Notice how although the boot Workbench is not present, the command proceeds as normal.

4.3 Before doing anything else, enter this line:

```
1>COPY RAM:Note#? to SYS:
```

When you enter this command AmigaDOS will present a requester asking you to insert the current boot disk; and if you have followed the instructions to date, that will be called BOOT. Insert the disk as requested and proceed to the next step.

IF YOU GET STUCK

Any readers experiencing difficult with any part of the AmigaDOS series can write enclosing an SAE to:

Mark Smiddy, co Amiga Format, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, BATH BA1 2BW

You will receive a personal reply for AmigaDOS conundrums - general queries will be answered in the Workbench section. If you have a modem, I can also be found lurking in the AmigaShopper conference on CIX or you can mail me direct to CIX @ "SMIDOID"

TABLE 1: THE WORKBENCH ITEMS AND AMIGADOS TERMS

Workbench item	AmigaDOS equivalent
Disk icon	Volume (plus disk's dot-info file)
Drawer icon	Directory (plus dot-info file)
Menu	None
Project icon	Data file (plus dot-info file)
Trashcan	Trashcan directory (plus dot-info file)
Tool icon	Program file (plus dot-info file)
Workbench window	Shell/CLI window

TABLE 2: WORKBENCH OPERATIONS AND THEIR CLOSEST AMIGADOS EQUIVALENTS.

Workbench operation	AmigaDOS equivalent
Clean up	None (only affects icons)
Close	CD
Discard	DELETE
Duplicate	COPY (files) or DISKCOPY (disks)
Empty Trash	DELETE
Info	STACK and INFO
Initialise	FORMAT
Last Error	WHY
Move (drag)	COPY or RENAME
Open	CD
Put in trash	RENAME
Redraw	None (only affects icons)
Remove from trash	RENAME
Rename	RENAME (files)/RELABEL (disks)
Snapshot	None (only affects icons)
Version	VERSION

5 Editing the Startup-Sequence

The last job is to edit the Amiga's boot startup so NotePad (or whatever application you put on your boot disk) starts when you switch on or reset.

5.1 Start the ED full-screen editor like this:

```
1>ED S:Startup-sequence
```

```
Ed 1.14
               ;replace the SetClock load with Date
FF >NIL: -0 ;speed up Text
resident CLI L:Shell-Seg SYSTEM pure add; activate Shell
resident c:Execute pure
mount newcon:
;
failat 11
run execute s:StartupII ;This lets resident be used for rest of script
wait >NIL: 5 mins ;wait for StartupII to complete (will signal when done)
;
SYS:System/SetMap gb ;Activate the ()/* on keypad
path ram: c: sys:utilities sys:system s: sys:prefs add ;set path for Workbenc

; ******* Insert the application you want to boot here ********************
;
         NOTEPAD             ; NotePad is used as per example
;                            ; It starts just before Workbench
;
****************************************************************************

LoadWB delay  ;wait for inhibit to end before continuing
endcli >NIL:
*x
```

5.2 When ED displays the Startup-sequence, use the cursor keys so the small orange1 blob - the cursor - is positioned over the L in LoadWB and press Return. This should open a line above LoadWB.

1 Dark blue in Workbench 2.

5.3 Move the Cursor into the empty space and type the name of the application you want to boot on Startup - NotePad in this example.

5.4 Press the key marked "ESC" (for escape) at the top left of the keyboard. The cursor will now move to the bottom of the screen displaying an asterisk "*". Press X and the Return to save the file. **Important: When making any changes to the Startup-sequence, however slight, always wait for at least one second after the disk light goes out before re-setting the machine.**

In this part you will have seen there is more to AmigaDOS than meets the casual glance. Do not worry if much of this seems unclear at this stage: all will be revealed over the coming months. This part has only barely scratched the surface of a fascinating subject. There is no easy way to learn AmigaDOS - just hard work and experiment - but the rewards are well worth the effort.

Here endeth the first lesson.

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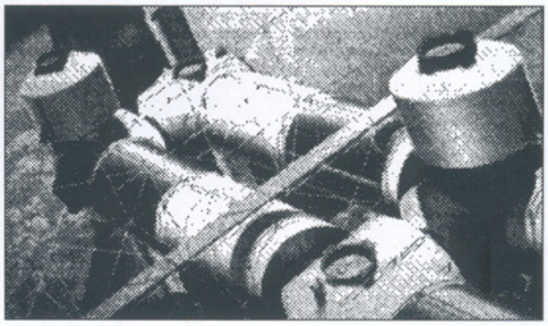
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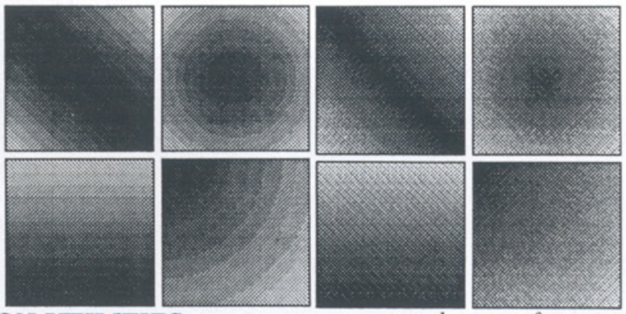
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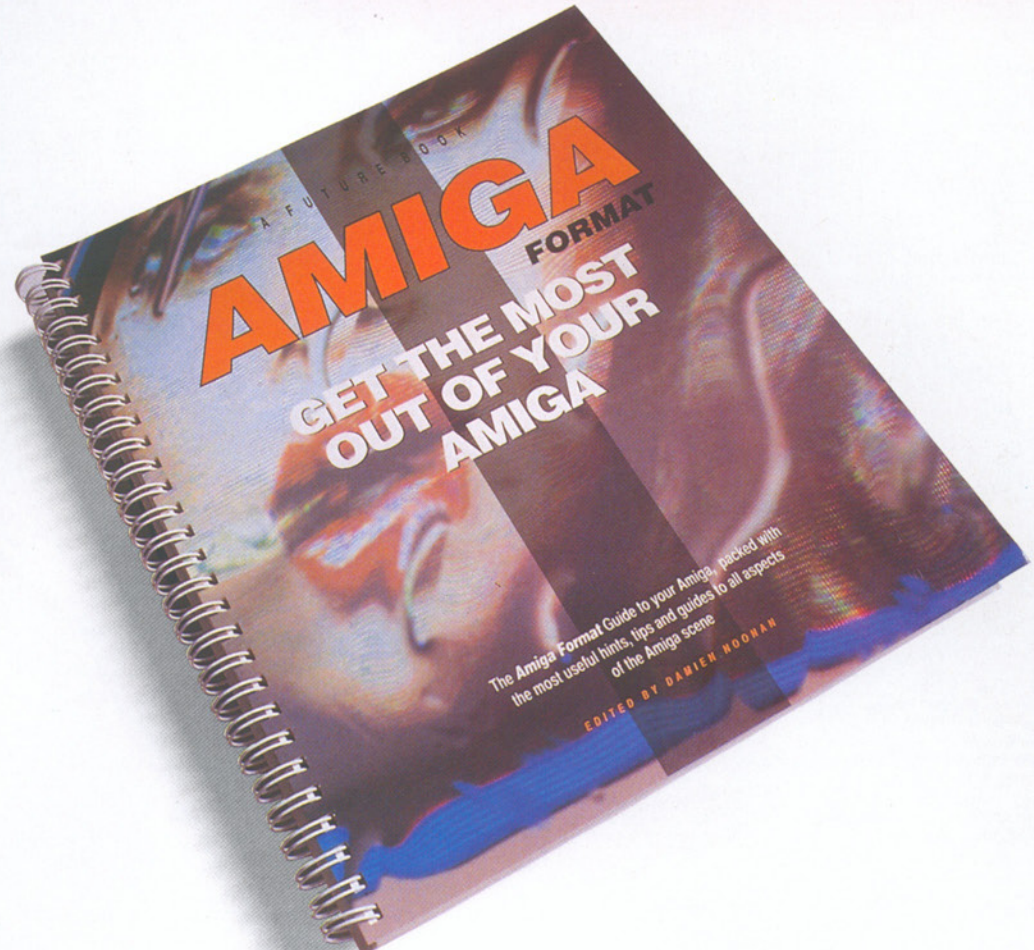
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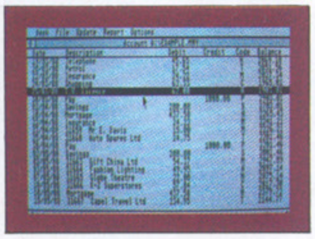


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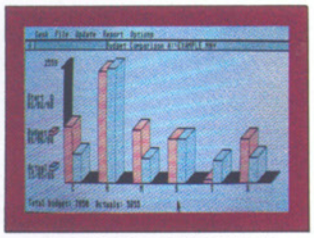
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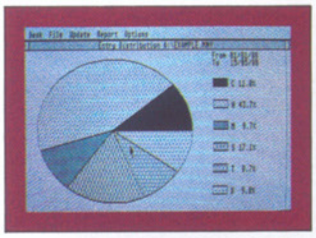
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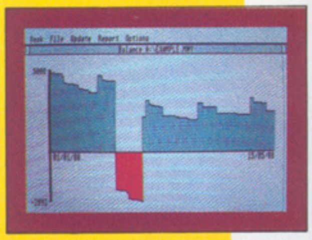
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WORKBENCH

ou have any problems with the technical side of your iga, with hardware or with serious software, write to Pat l he'll try to answer you. Alternatively, if you have any ice for others or any handy tips to share, send it in and you ld win a prize.
T MCDONALD, WORKBENCH,
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GAMEBUSTERS

ou've just found the cheat mode, mapped out the levels or nd all the passwords for the latest game – whatever the he cheat, send it to Maff and you could win a prize. Also, if 're stuck somewhere, ask the Helping Hand section in nebusters for advice – or if you've read of a problem in ping Hand that someone else has and you can solve it, n send in the answer to win a prize!
FF EVANS, GAMEBUSTERS (OR GAMEBUSTERS HELPING ND), AMIGA FORMAT, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BA1 2BW

LETTERS

Letters pages are for you to air your views and share your nions: please remember not to ask questions that should in Workbench! What Damien is looking for are thought-voking or entertaining letters, if they're short there's a bet-chance they'll get in. Prizes for the best two. LETTERS, IGA FORMAT, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BA1 2BW

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Letters

If you've got something to say, this is the place to say it. If you want to share your wisdom, lend the benefit of your experience or make a few waves, then get in touch. Keep it short, original and amusing and send it to **Letters, Amiga Format, Bath BA1 2BW.**

LUCKY OR WHAT?

Our ten-year-old son David watched our efforts when we played *Cracker,* the game on Coverdisk 25, and we felt quite pleased with ourselves completing it in only four guesses. Then David had a go, and to our amazement he did it in one go. I couldn't believe it either! "That was a cracker - beat that!" he said. What are the odds of that, can you tell us?

CJ HUCKIN, SHEPPERTON

"Err, remarkable" - as a well-known TV commentator used to say (when being imitated by Spitting Image or half the population of the UK). In actual fact, though, the odds against it aren't that huge: there are five colours of pin, I believe, so you have a one in five chance of getting each one right first time. The chance of getting all four right first time is therefore 1 in 625.

SMART COOKIE

Do you think anyone would buy your magazine without owning an Amiga? Well, yes - because I do! I am presently the owner of an Atrai ST, which I haven't touched for months. I bought every issue of *ST Format* up to 23, when I started buying *Amiga Format* because it is better to read and has more pages in.

Only trouble is, I have all the disks but I've no idea what the data on them is like! I am at the moment trying (unsuccessfully) to sell my ST. When I get my Amiga I will hopefull program pieces of software for your Coverdisk.

JOHN ARCHIBALD, LOANHEAD

You're a smart chap, John, though it's a bit of a shame you're missing out on ST Format, *an excellent magazine that's gone from strength to strength over the last few months. All you* Amiga Format *readers who don't yet own an Amiga, don't despair! We know you're out there, and we are trying to organise something in the way of a competition for you.*

UNLUCKY? OR CARELESS?

I bought an Amiga at Christmas. A month later I was looking through the box and I found an envelope. I opened it and inside was a warranty card, which I read and found I could no longer have a warranty. Now I have a broken port and don't know what to do. I don't want to spend a lot of money, so please could you tell me where I can get one?

TILESH PATEL, EAST MOLESEY

All new owners please take note: this reinforces the importance of filling in your warranty card when you get the machine. Your best bet, Tilesh, is to phone up your local computer shop and ask them how much it would cost to fit a new port: it won't be an awful lot, and it's safer than trying to do it yourself.

RUMBLEFISH

PRIZE

Still looking for songs with games in the lyrics? If it hasn't been mentioned already, I believe I have the ultimate: it not only has a classic arcade game in the title, it's also a pretty good song. The song in question is *Space Invaders* by the Piranhas, whose biggest hit (in fact, their only hit) was *Tom Hark* in the early Eighties. *Space Invaders* came out at the height of the game's popularity and is about a man who got mighty upset "at not beating that bloody machine, those aliens are really mean". Even if you don't send me a T shirt, at least listen to the song because it's pretty good.

IAN WRIGHT, CO DURHAM

Fairy 'nuff, you gets yer T shirt. But we can't find a copy of the record anywhere, not even in Marcus's highly insalubrious record collection.

BLOOD OUT OF A STONE

I was listening to my Walkman while doing my paprround, playing Jon Bon Jovi, *Blaze of Glory* from *Young Guns Two.* When I heard the words 'blood money' I rushed home, looked at the cassette case and to my delight the song was called *Blood Money.* How's that for a game immortalised in song! Do I get a prize for that magnificent discovery?

PAUL TUCKER, GRIMSBY

Sorry, no. We only count songs that are actually intended to refer to a game: I think you'll probably find that old JBJ had something else on his mind when he wrote that one.

SECOND OPINIONS

The little program book on the cover of *Amiga Format* October issue is excellent: it should be given to every Amiga owner and left around in the shops. But I have just a couple of comments…

You've got *PageRender 3D* wrong again – it does not need *PageFlipper.* It produces standard Anim files which go straight into *DPaint* etc. In fact, the strong point of this program is that it works very well as a partner for *DPaint.* It's time it was properly reviewed in *Amiga Format.*

the other point is that *Deluxe Photolab* had HAM as well as all the other formats years ago, so *DPaint IV* is not the first. *Photolab* has lots of features that aren't in *DPaint IV,* but the interface is bad. *Pixel 3D* works much better than *DigiWorks,* which is almost totally

unuseable. And finally, *Dynacadd* is probably worth including in such a survey.

DON COX, MIDDLESBROUGH

Many thanks for the opinions, Don, and I would like to hear comments from many more people who have expert knowledge of a particular field, especially if they disagree with something we've said. CAD remains an unexplored area of the Amiga for many people, mainly because they don't have a real use for it: but we'll take a look at this subject in the near future.

PRIZE

LOOKING FORWARD

I am one of the few people in the known universe to own an Amiga 3000. This is, however, a mixed blessing. I am increasingly annoyed by the reviews in your magazine since they do not state whether the software/hardware will work on the A3000. There is enough software, including games, that does work to convince me that sloppy coding and over-elaborate protection systems are to blame for that which doesn't.

I remember the fiasco when Kickstart 1.3 supreceded Kickstart 1.2 on the Amiga 500. Software stopped working. Owners of brand-new machines were left to discover (at their cost) what did or didn't run. One day soon, buyers of Amiga 500s are going to switch on their machines to be greeted by a Workbench 2 prompt. Why wait until then to pressure software houses into thinking ahead?

STEVEN LOMAS, GURNEY SLADE

We plan to have our A3000 up and running soon, and naturally all software we review will be checked on it. Much serious software already carries a standard sticker that confirms it as AmigaDOS 2 compatible, and we hope that games houses will now follow the example of the better performers in the AmigaDOS 1.3 switch a few years ago by including clear information on compatbility on all products.

SOUND IDEA

While on holiday in California recently I bought a pair of stereo speakers for my Amiga 500. They cost about £20 and are official Commodore parts. The A1s, as they are called, have 7 watts music power, bass and treble boosters and independent volume controls, and colour-coordinated Commodore accessories must be a plus in anyone's book. Why don't Commodore sell them here?

ALAN HOLWILL, HAYLE

Mystery to me why not. Possibly there's no demand.

FAIR QUESTION

I live in Germany (no, I'm not in the Army) and eagerly await your magazine every month. I would like to subscribe and get the magazine earlier (we're about four weeks behind) but I'm discouraged by the outrageous cost. How can you justify an extra £30 for Europeans?

ALAN HOLWILL, STUTTGART

You move around a bit, don't you? OK, I've asked our Subscriptions department the hard questions and the details are as follows.

We send all overseas subs Air mail, because surface mail is too slow and liable to damage. The cost at which we can send Air Mail comes into three categories. first, there is Printed Matter, which must be rolled and left open: not a suitable way of sending a magazine with a Coverdisk. Second there is Small packet, which again has to be left open for Customs inspection. Since we slip the Coverdisk inside issues we mail, rather than sticking it to the cover, to give it extra protection, the disk would fall out of an unsealed packet, so we can't do that either.

This leaves us with the third and – of course – most expensive way. This is charged according to weight and an average issue of Amiga Format apparently weighs about 510g, so it ends up costing just under £3 per issue, the same as the magazine. Over 12 issues, the cost would be in excess of £35. We actually absorb a small amount of this cost, but really all we're doing is covering our costs. We are making no profit and probably a very slight loss on European subscription mailing costs.

The really galling thing, of course, is that someone who lives in Ireland, though they are a part of the British Isles, still has to pay the same as someone living in Greece or Italy. That's the way the postal charges work and sadly there's absolutely nothing we can do about it. But we are really not ripping off overseas customers: we're doing our best!

DON'T FRET!

I bought my Amiga in November last year and just played games for three months: but after a while, I began to see the serious side and realised that extra memory was imperative. I decided to take my Amiga up to 2 Megs. But the shock came that same day…

The postman delivered a small package from the Home Computer Club, which turned out to be *Manchester United: Europe*. At the beginning, it tells you your computer's stats: mine read "CPU: 6800 processor, 0.5 Megabytes, Fat Agnus".

Hang on! Fat Agnus! I thought that every Amiga this last year was fitted with a Fatter Agnus! Have I been ripped off?

P BARKER, SOWERBY BRIDGE

OPINIONS NOTED…

I'm not a prude, nor easily embarassed, but if I wish to see scantily-clad 'models' then I'll buy one of the lower orders of newspaper.

MALCOLM ROGERS, RUMBURGH

My once-faithful mouse has gone Kaput and I've decided to buy a replacement, but the problem is which one! How about reviewing a selection of mice in a future issue?

STUART HARDY, SHEFFIELD

I have been looking for months now for a Draughts or Checkers game for my Amiga and have so far drawn a blank. Is there any chance that you could put one on your Coverdisk?

RT EVA, BROMSGROVE

If you made Amiga Format £3 the extra 5p paid by each reader could be put towards running competitions with expensive prizes.

AJ BEVAN, ASHFORD

My keyboard stopped working and I was told I'd have to pay £117 for a new one, apparently because the 'membrane' had gone. You can't get spares because the keyboards are made by a firm in Malaysia. I was rescued by Diamond computers of Poole,who did me a new keyboard on exchange for the old one at £35.

STEVE BOYCE, PLYMOUTH

Back in your first issue you reviewed a game called *Wayne Gretzky's Hockey.* can you tell me how to get hold of a copy, or have any readers got a copy I could buy?

SIMON BUTT, LODE

Too much on games or not enough? Amiga Format is, by far, the most balanced magazine on the world market. Not only do you address all areas of interest, but each section contains a lot of information.

WOODY MELTCHER, AUSTRALIA

Would you please tell your printers to take more care when slapping the flour and water on the binding?

SAM BROWN, UPPER NORWOOD

Do I get a prize for the amount of time I've spent, after looking in the Advertisers' Index, actually trying to find the page without the number on it? can't you print numbers on every page?

CHRIS SHEW, GREENFORD

Are you going soft? Honestly, why an Army ad? Unless you want to end up with coupons for Fairy liquid or accessories for Barbie and Ken, stop now!

N POLLINGER, BOURNEMOUTH

I've put pen to paper in your quest to find people outside the UK who read your magazine. I'm English, but I reside in Switzerland now. See you at the Show in November!

GARY RIPPON, SWITZERLAND

The one real advantage of owning a CDTV would be the ability to use titles such as the Guinness Disk of Records and the Hutchinson's Encyclopedia - this is surely where CD systems come into their own.

ANDREW GILL, MICKLEOVER

It is inevitable that the CDTV is eventually going to be primarily a games system. Are you planing to buy *The Illustrated Holy Bible* or *Garden Plants,* at £35?

JAMES DUFFY, CHEYLESMORE

Nicki, at ye Olde Barne, deserves a big round of applause. She's a credit to you. Yours 'Bruno-Brooks-ingly'

EDWARD MARRIOTT, KEIGHLEY

Is it really so much trouble to carry on the practice of saying the means of program control: joystick, mouse or keyboard? I'm seriously physically handicapped, having the use of only one arm. I already regret buying some expensive lemons…

J ELMER, LONDON

Was there nothing else to put on the disk but three games? Not even one utility for those of us who don't play games? You'll probably say that three games for three pounds is cheap, but many of us prefer something useful.

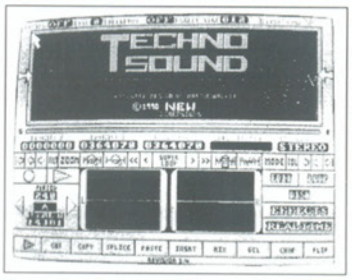
MALCOLM ROGERS, AGAIN

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Err... very hard to say. In actual fact, there is no hard and fast rule when Fatter Aguses were introduced, so there's no suggestion that you've been ripped off. In actual fact, the kind of Agnus chip you have doesn't make any real difference, especially if you're fitting a lot of extra memory anyway. When you buy, ask the supplier about memory configuration and they'll explain it to you.

FAIR WARNING

Where does one get hold of release dates? Two months ago, when I heard of the release of a game called *Final Fight,* I believed this was a simple question, but I have since learned otherwise.

I first read about the game in a magazine a few months ago and having thrown pounds away on the coin-op machine I was keen to find out more. I started off looking in other magazines and found small articles, but there was no release date and this started to get to me.

In one magazine I noticed a number to ring for more information on the new release. Great, I thought, at last. It was one of those 0898 numbers so I expected some sort of con, and there was. It was an answering machine. I kept answering these long-drawn-out questions for as long as I could without spending too much and then, still with no mention of *Final Fight,* I put the phone down.

After seeing two reviews of the game in other magazines, I was determined to find out the release date. I went round all the shops in town stocking computer games and not one of them could tell me.

I am sure that other people share my opinion on this matter and would like to see release dates published. Have you ever thought of doing this: a list of games out in the next month and the date? I am sure readers would find this most helpful.

MATTHEW HIBLIN, CAMBRIDGE

We do our level best to review games just before they are actually released, so usually the games you read about in any particular issue of the magazine will be on sale that same month. There are inevitably hiccups and releases of games are constantly being adjusted. All the same, we'll look into it and see what we can do.

GOOD QUESTION

If the CDTV uses an infra-red input device and the Amiga lacks this, then surely when the CD-ROM drive becomes available for the Amiga some games and programs will be incompatible: like the CDTV version of *Sim City* for which, according to an article you ran a couple of months ago, Infogrames have written a special driver for the infra-red device?

PAUL LANG, KENTON

We can only assume that the CD-ROM drive will also have to provide an adaptor for an infra-red remote control and come with one supplied. There are also changes to the operating system on the CDTV to allow the CD data and audio to be read, so presumably getting all this to work is the reason why the CD-ROM drive is taking so long in development.

MAD AS A HOUSE

Lo and behold! My predictions for the future of the Amiga... *New screen modes:* HAM has been improved so much that new variants appear, including BEEF, CHICKEN and BIG MAC. *Guru Meditation:* due to popular demand, Commodore reincarnates the Guru, renaming him Sam Tramiel. There is even a picture of Sam when the machine crashes. *Sound:* the latest version of *MED* (147.08) is capable of playing tunes backwards, sideways, inside out and even in ways your mother wouldn't like. It even has a new feature to tell you when the tune you create is crap: it shows you a picture of Sam Tramiel... *Graphics: Deluxe Paint VIII* is announced, featuring more dithering than John Major.

Can you tell the difference between a 1978 calculator and an Atari ST? No, neither can I!

EDDIE TALBOT, RUGBY

The difference is, a 1978 calculator would have been made by Commodore.

THE GREAT END-OF-GAME DEBATE

We've had a good bunch of letters from y'all, giving your opinions (and pretty opinionated some of you are, too!) about game endings: which give you a real sense of achievement after playing all the way through a fiendish game, and which are just a disappointment after all the trials you've been through. Here's a few...

KNIGHTS OF THE CRYSTALLION: It finishes with several animations of 'your' Crystallion running and jumping, superbly done, with some fine music to accompany it. A script then appears, telling you that you can sit on the Council of the Tsimit. Brilliant.

STU MACKAY, HAVERFORDWEST

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2: Perhaps the greatest ever, if not the longest, an animated cartoon running over 15 minutes. It is very rewarding at the end of such a long game to be able to sit back and watch. Sierra deserve much credit for giving such a great game an equally spectacular ending.

NEIL VINCENT, HORSFORTH

DOUBLE DRAGON: The ending is where Player 1 and Player 2 fight for the girl, then once one of them is dead the girl comes down and gives the winner a great big kiss.

CHRIS McVEIGH, NEWBRIDGE

GODS: What a fantastic game! When you kill the Level 4 guardian, you get ten free lives as a present from the gods and you can start again on Level One.

GOD CARL, TOOTING

WINGS: On your last mission you fly against a lone jerry and win easily. You go through the usual briefing and find a paper announcing the surrender of Germany. After this there is loads of flag-waving and a great deal of music: loads of planes fly past and the words 'The End' appear. Then you see the squadron memorial. One of the most under-rated games ever!

LT COLONEL MIKE 'MOSTIN' GREENAWAY

SWIV: You see a massive nuclear explosion, and then it gives you a rather humorous message, part of which is "Humanity can live forever in peace and harmony... so they won't need an army any more. Your SWIV unit is being disbanded and you are now unemployed. Your P45 is in the post".

LEMMINGS: You receive a Champion Player Cup and then hear applause and congratulations.

ALEX CHURCHILL, THROOP

WANTED!

Your honest opinion of AMIGA FORMAT

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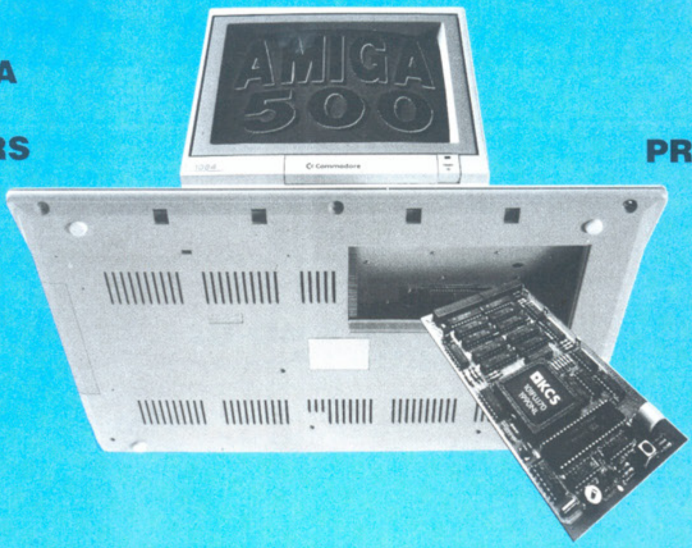
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Random Sample

Winding up with a cheery wave and a heartfelt 'go away!'

BUZZ!

Get all your balls in the air: yes, juggling is the next big thing: they reckon it's good exercise for the brain. It's easier to learn than you think it would be, too: catch the habit!

MOVIES

Kevin Costner as Robin Hood has to be one of the most pathetic attempts of recent times, but the ending is so funny!

Soundtracks

TIN MACHINE
TIN MACHINE II

BONGWATER
YOU DON'T LOVE ME YET

Quote of the Month

Do you know where the quote on our Contents pages comes from? If so, tell us on a postcard, add your name and address and send it to 'Quote of the Month 28' at our usual competition address, and you could win a fabulous Amiga Format T shirt! Nobody knew the quote on Issue 26, so we're keeping the T shirt…

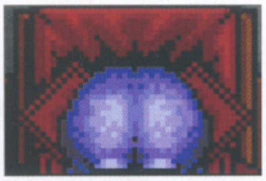
BASEBALL KIT Winners

Lucky winners of the Domark *RBI Baseball* competition in Issue 26 are as follows, but first the answers. Charlie Brown loses at baseball, Calvin and his tiger Hobbs play very bizarre games loosely similar to baseball (23 bases?) and Mickey Mouse is very seldom seen playing baseball at all, really, so the correct answers were C, C and C.

First prize, including a luvverly baseball jacket, goes to Bonita Applebum (Hmmm!) of Leominster in Herefordshire while the four runners-up who get a bat, ball and cap baseball kit are Cathy Morris of Boston, Steve Wood of Barking, James Melbow of Sutton and Ben Dempsey from Chalfont St Peter. Well done all, and expect your prizes to arive in a couple of days!

Spot the shot...

Simply identify the game that this small portion of a screenshot is attempting to cunningly disguise, then send a postcard with the answer and your name and address on to Spot the Shot 28 at our competition address and you could win a fabulous Amiga Format T shirt, as seen on the Mail Order pages (Page 220-221). Meanwhile, Spot the Shot 5 from Issue 26 was won by Stuart Williams of Redruth: the answer was *Jimmy White's Snooker.*



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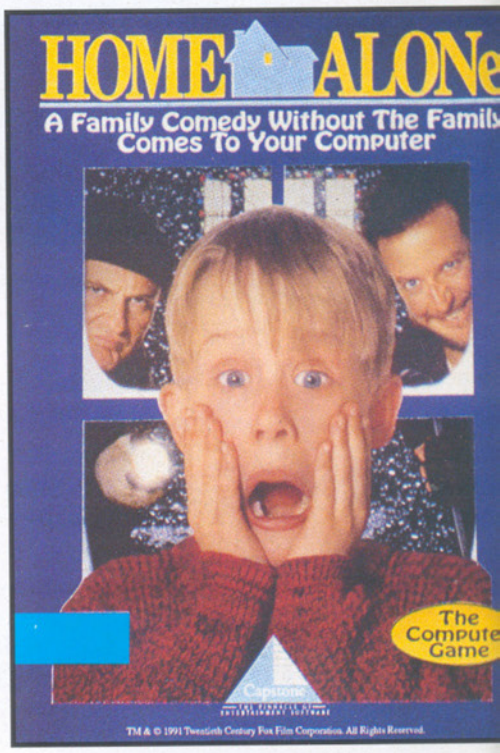


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